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THE REAL APPEAL OF OZ THE GREAT AND POWERFUL IS NOT IN THE CGI; IT'S THAT THE STORY REMINDS US OF OUR CHILDHOOD PAGE 17

Is $10K rent Market value?

Real estate agent known for his attempt to bring Starbucks into Kensington is looking for a new tenant — possibly a big franchise PAGE 3

Art returned to Jewish dealer

German museum gives back an oil painting to the estate of Max Stern, whose family was forced by Nazis to sell it before fleeing to Montreal PAGE 10

Jays' loss is WBC's gain

How well can Toronto play without Arencibia, Reyes, and Lawrie? World Baseball Classic throws a wrench into pre-season prep PAGE 32

NEWS WORTH SHARING.

FINAL BATTLE ENDS FOR CHAVEZ

Venezuelans took to the streets Tuesday to mourn the death of President Hugo Chavez, seen during a government march in Caracas in 2002. Chavez, who electrified Latin America for more than a decade, died after a battle with cancer. Story, page 6. ARIANA CUBILLOS & FERNANDO LLANO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Toronto edges out Chicago as 4th largest city

But is bigger still better in North America? Stats show a population surge, but some say we need to build more jobs, homes

Well, move over, Chicago. Toronto is laying claim to being the fourth largest city in North America.

Since Toronto was amalgamated in 1998, it has billed itself as North America's fifth largest city after Mexico City, New York, Los Angeles and Chicago.

But according to the latest census data from Statistics Canada, as of last July 1, Toronto's population was 2,791,140 — about 84,000 more than Chicago's 2,707,120.

While both numbers are estimates, the gap was enough to spur Toronto economic development staffers to declare the city is "now the fourth largest municipality in North America."

Doing something right

"I think it's indicative of the fact that something right is happening here, when people are flocking to the city as opposed to other places."

Deputy Mayor Doug Holyday

Toronto grew by 38,000 in the previous 12 months. In Chicago's case, 12-month growth was about 11,000.

More people are staying in Toronto, said the report to Tuesday's meeting of council's economic development committee. Ten years ago, 75,000 more people moved out of Toronto to elsewhere in the province than moved in. By 2012, the net loss had narrowed to only 23,000.

While the title of No. 4 confers bragging rights, it also brings challenges.

"We need to focus on creating more jobs," said Michael Thompson, chairman of the city's economic development committee. "We have to make sure people can find work; we have to make sure people have housing." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Unpaid fines plague TTC

TTC enforcement officers wrote 7,204 tickets last year for violations ranging from fare evasion to panhandling. But the city says only about one in five of those tickets was paid.

A likely reason is that one-third of the tickets written, 2,705, were issued to people with no fixed address, according to information obtained through an access to information request.

"The vast majority of these no-fixed-addresses relate to people who just refuse to give us an address," said TTC spokesman Brad Ross, who stressed that transit officers don't generally issue tickets to homeless people.

The numbers raise questions about how to police a network that carries 1.7 million riders a day, many of them on buses and streetcars where there is virtually no uniformed presence. They also raise the question of whether TTC enforcement officers, who patrol the subway in addition to Toronto police, have the authority they need to do the job effectively.

Subway collectors are reluctant to confront potentially aggressive panhandlers, who often just ignore them.

"It's uncomfortable for everybody, but we haven't developed a good strategy for dealing with that issue," TTC chair Karen Stintz said.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Money down the drain

1,441

Only 1,441 tickets were paid last year. Nearly half the tickets TTC officers issued last year, some 3,215, were for fare evasion, an offence that costs the system about $20 million a year.

Teacher protests. School graduations up in air

Grade 8 graduations in Toronto could be at risk this year if the teachers' union can't strike a deal to restore volunteer extracurricular activities.

Last week, the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario said it would continue its ban on extracurricular activities.

After a year without popular activities like cross-country meets, Christmas concerts and winter sports, the possibility of finishing without graduation is a step too far for many frustrated parents.

"Graduations are a key part of the school community," said Ken Arnott, president of the Ontario Principals' Council. "Some students have been there for 10 years and it's their last hurrah."

Arnott said some boards have been actively recruiting parents to help out so graduations can go ahead. Holding daytime graduations is one solution, he said, but parents have responded negatively to the idea as many won't be able to get off work to attend.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Market feels development pinch

Kensington. Realtor who tried to bring in Starbucks hoping to score with more upscale tenant

Once a bustling immigrant neighbourhood where live chickens and goats were paraded between butcher shops and fishmongers, Kensington Market has changed into an enclave of independent business and iconoclastic cultural sensibilities.

But some, like Ossie Pavao, feel the market's identity is under threat from encroaching condos and chain stores. The lease for businesses at Pavao's building, including his Casa Acoreana café and food shop, expires on May 31, paving the way for new tenants to move into the space.

The total building rent is listed at $10,000 per month.

"I can't afford that. Nobody can afford that," said Pavao, who wouldn't disclose what he currently pays for rent.

Phil Pick, the real-estate agent marketing the property for Pavao's landlord, said he expects "a lot of polarization" from the decision to look for new tenants at what he calls "the focal intersection" of Kensington Market. Already known in the neighbourhood for a widely opposed proposal to bring in a Starbucks five years ago, Pick said he's once again willing to reach out to national franchises or chain businesses.

"My mandate is to get the best possible tenant," he said. "It's reality. Whether people want to accept it or not, I don't have control over that.

"I don't take any pleasure in this," he added. "They knew it was coming. They see the changes that are coming in the market. It's just things maturing."

In recent weeks, a group called Friends of Kensington Market has held three demonstrations to oppose a prospective Loblaws supermarket in a new condo project near Augusta Avenue and College Street, just north of the neighbourhood. Opponents say that would force small-scale enterprises in Kensington to shut their doors, to the detriment of the local community.

Real-estate agent Phil Pick, who once tried to bring a Starbucks to Kensington Market, is again angling to bring in a national franchise or chain business, which many locals worry will destroy the neighbourhood. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

In a letter dated March 1 and posted on the Friends of Kensington Market Facebook page, Coun. Adam Vaughan wrote to Loblaws chairman Galen Weston, urging him to "consider what might happen if damage were to be done to one of Toronto's most storied neighbourhoods."

"You can go anywhere to find a Starbucks or a Loblaws or whatever chain that you're looking for," Russell said, "whereas there's only one Kensington Market."

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Ford's lobbyist letters prompt complaint

Toronto resident Frank Trotz, pictured at city hall, has filed a complaint against Rob Ford over letters sent to lobbyists on behalf of the mayor's football foundation. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

City hall. Citizen takes action over mayor's fundraising efforts for football foundation

A Parkdale artist has complained to Toronto's integrity commissioner about the fundraising letters Mayor Rob Ford recently sent to lobbyists.

Frank Trotz submitted his formal complaint at city hall on Tuesday. He said he hopes Ford is taken to court over the issue and forced out of office. Neither will happen.

"I'd like to see him dismissed," Trotz said. "The faster we can put this bozo out of office, the better."

Ford sent letters on behalf of his football foundation to at least two registered lobbyists in the past two months. His chief of staff, Mark Towhey, said in a statement that the letters were sent in error, that no donations from lobbyists were received, and that the foundation will review its procedures.

"It is our understanding that the Football Foundation makes every attempt to remove registered lobbyists from its mass mailing lists," Towhey said.

Quoted

"I am a citizen of Toronto and I want something better from our mayor."

Complainant Frank Trotz

The city's integrity commissioner, Janet Leiper, ruled in 2010 that then-councillor Ford violated the code of conduct for councillors by soliciting donations from lobbyists in 2009. Leiper's report to council led to the court case that nearly cost Ford his job as mayor.

Leiper will now consider Trotz's complaint. She will submit a new report to council if she finds that Ford breached the code once more. Ford may be reprimanded, but a significant punishment is unlikely.

Ford did alter his fundraising practices after Leiper first inquired. Unlike the 2009 letters, the recent letters do not include his official city letterhead.

Ford's press secretary did not respond to requests for comment. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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DineSafe app dishes on restaurants

Does the pork taste funny? Mice scurrying around underfoot during dinner? Does your waiter have that shifty look?

Thanks to an app developed by Toronto's Matt Ruten, you can check up on the history of your favourite restaurants from the comfort (or discomfort) of your seat.

The new app promises to take some of the risk and mystery out of dining in Toronto by making DineSafe inspections available on your iPhone.

Called DineSafe Toronto, the application harnesses the City of Toronto's Open Data system to get the information.

"The main thing is having it in your pocket and a super-simple interface. You just open it up and it shows you stuff that's near you at the moment," said Ruten, a 27-year-old web developer who built the app in his spare time.

Even if a restaurant has passed recent inspections, posted signage only details the last two at most. Hints of a checkered past are available through the city's website.

Ruten is charging $0.99 for the app in hopes of recovering some server costs, but isn't expecting it to be a big money-maker.

The app has a simple interface that presents a list of restaurants nearby, along with their distance and a series of icons detailing the eatery's inspection history. All-green means a clean history of inspections. Yellow and red indicate warnings or even closures.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Newmarket

York Region's former top doc denies abusing boys

A 90-year-old doctor repeatedly denied allegations he sexually abused young boys while a small-town doctor more than four decades ago.

Using an ear piece to follow questioning, Dr. Owen Slingerland told Newmarket court more than a dozen times on Tuesday that he didn't abuse four young boys, including sons of a family friend, from 1959 to 1970.

Slingerland, former medical officer of health for York Region, testified he gave medical examinations to boys in a church basement during a Cub Scout meeting to help them gain merit badges.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

VP named interim president following Chavez's death

Venezuela. After the passing of notorious president, country's foreign minister says Vice-President Nicolas Maduro will take over, with elections to be called within 30 days

Venezuela's foreign minister says Vice-President Nicolas Maduro will serve as interim president in the wake of Hugo Chavez's death and that elections will be called within 30 days.

Foreign Minister Elias Jaua also told the Telesur network that Maduro would be the candidate of the governing socialist party.

It was not immediately clear when elections would actually be held.

The government said Chavez died Tuesday after a nearly-two-year bout with cancer.

Hundreds of anguished Venezuelans poured into the streets of downtown Caracas crying, hugging each other and shouting slogans in support of Chavez after learning of his death Tuesday.

Clusters of women with tears streaming down their faces clung to each other and wept near the Miraflores presidential palace.

Nearby, men with grim and sombre faces pumped their arms in the air while shouting "Long live Chavez! Long live Chavismo!"

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Exclusively online

For more news on Hugo Chavez go to metronews.ca.

Canadian reaction

As Chavez, 58, finally succumbed Tuesday to the cancer that he had been fighting for nearly two years, Prime Minister Stephen Harper spoke out about the death.

- Harper said that he looked forward "to working with (Chavez's) successor and other leaders in the region to build a hemisphere that is more prosperous, secure and democratic."
- The prime minister in a statement said: "I hope the people of Venezuela can now build for themselves a better, brighter future based on the principles of freedom, democracy, human rights." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Supporters of Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez react in downtown Caracas on Tuesday after the country's vice-president announced Chavez's death.

FERNANDO LLANO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pistorius case. Family feud erupts over dad's remarks

A public feud erupted Tuesday within the family of Oscar Pistorius, the double-amputee Olympian charged with murdering his girlfriend, as the runner and his relatives distanced themselves from comments his father reportedly made about guns and crime in South Africa.

South Africa's ruling party, the African National Congress, also waded into the family dispute. A spokesman for the party accused Henke Pistorius, the runner's father, of racism for his observations reported in British newspapers about crime against white South Africans and the suggestion that the ANC government isn't adequately protecting them.

The Pistorius family and the reputation management firm it has hired are working to head off any negative publicity or controversy that might possibly have a bearing on the outcome of the runner's case.

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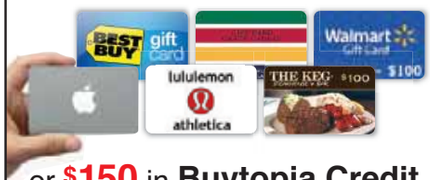

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Time running out to change U.S. pot laws

Eight former DEA chiefs speak out. Group urges U.S. to nullify two states' weed-legalization laws

Eight former U.S. drug chiefs warned the federal government Tuesday that time is running out to nullify Colorado and Washington's new laws legalizing recreational marijuana use, and a United Nations agency also urged challenges to the measures it says violate international treaties.

The former Drug Enforcement Administration chiefs criticized Barack Obama's administration for moving too slowly to file a lawsuit that would force the states to rescind the legislation. Marijuana is illegal under federal law.

"My fear is that the Justice Department will do what they are doing now: do nothing and say nothing," former DEA administrator Peter Bensinger told The Associated Press in an interview. "If they don't act now, these laws will be fully implemented in a matter of months."

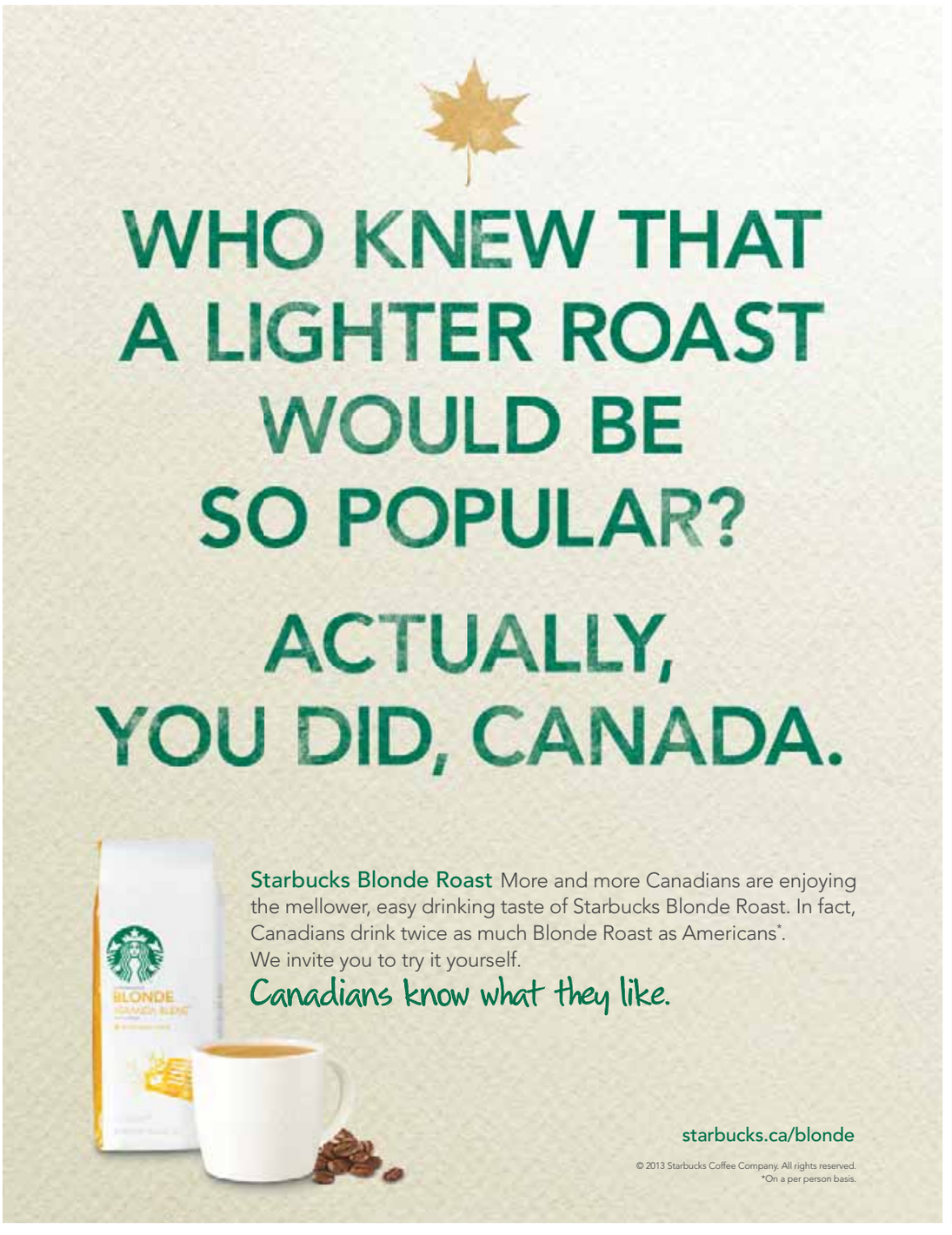
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quote

"The former DEA chiefs' statement can best be seen as a self-interested plea to validate the costly and failed policies they championed."

Ethan Nadelmann, executive director of the New York-based Drug Policy Alliance

Former DEA chiefs urged action on marijuana laws. ANDRIESKI/THE ASSOICATED PRESS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Baird. Palestinians could face 'consequences' for pursuing Israel at the UN

Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird has told a powerful pro-Israel lobby that Palestinians will feel "consequences" from Canada if they pursue the Jewish state at the International Criminal Court.

Baird issued the warning just as the federal government considers whether to end hundreds of millions of dollars in Canadian humanitarian aid to the Palestinians when it expires at the end of this month.

Baird delivered his message to an approving audience Sunday in Washington at the annual conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. Canada strongly opposed the Palestinians' successful effort in November to win elevated status at the UN and has warned them against using it to file an international legal complaint against Israel.

It has also opposed the Palestinian bid to win membership with the United Nations cultural organization, UNESCO. Palestinian officials have said they would have no choice but to pursue Israel at the International Criminal Court to halt construction of new settlements in what it claims as its territory.

The settlement issue wasn't raised in the panel discussion, but Baird was asked by a moderator what "the repercussions might be from your country" toward the Palestinians if they went to the ICC.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quote

"He could have been generous, and we didn't see any generosity in his remarks."

Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird, criticizing the speech that Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas delivered at the UN General Assembly in November following the successful Palestinian bid for statehood.

U.S.-led sanctions

North Korea vows to cancel Korean War ceasefire

North Korea vowed Tuesday to cancel the 1953 ceasefire that ended the Korean War, citing a U.S.-led push for punishing UN sanctions over its recent nuclear test and ongoing U.S.-South Korean joint military drills.

Without elaborating, the Korean People's Army Supreme Command warned of "surgical strikes" meant to unify the divided Korean Peninsula and of an indigenous "precision nuclear striking tool.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Picking the next pope

Vatican still waiting for five cardinals for conclave

The Sistine Chapel closed to visitors on Tuesday, and construction work got underway to prepare it for the conclave that will choose the next pope — but five cardinals had yet to arrive for the preparatory meetings designed to acquaint themselves with one another and discuss the state of the Catholic Church.

The Vatican insisted nothing was amiss and that the five cardinals would be present in the coming days.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Afghanistan

U.S.-led coalition will no longer publish Taliban attack figures

The U.S.-led military command in Afghanistan will no longer count and publish the number of Taliban attacks, a statistical measure that it once touted as a gauge of U.S. and allied success but now dismisses as flawed.

The move comes one week after the coalition, known as the International Security Assistance Force, acknowledged in response to inquiries by The Associated Press that it had incorrectly reported a seven per cent drop in Taliban attacks in 2012 compared to 2011. In fact, there was no decline at all, ISAF officials now say.

The mistake was attributed by ISAF officials to a clerical error.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Russia

Star dancer among those arrested in Bolshoi acid attack

Russian police said Tuesday they arrested three men in the acid attack that nearly blinded the artistic director of the Bolshoi ballet, including a star dancer suspected of masterminding the plot.

Sergei Filin was left with severe burns to his eyes and face when a masked attacker threw a jar of sulfuric acid in his face as he returned home late on Jan. 17.

Interior Ministry spokesman Anatoly Lastovetsky said Bolshoi soloist Pavel Dmitrichenko is suspected of planning the attack.

Police also arrested the suspected perpetrator of the attack and the man believed to have driven him to and from the scene, the spokesman said.

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This undated handout shows a reproduction provided Tuesday by the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart of the painting The Virgin with Child. The Stuttgart museum has returned the painting to the estate of Jewish art dealer Max Stern, who was forced to sell his collection before fleeing Nazi Germany. STAATSGALERIE/DPA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Museum returns painting sold in escape from Nazis

Art dealer settled in Montreal. 600-year-old painting turned over by German gallery at ceremony at Canadian Embassy in Berlin

A German museum has returned a 600-year-old painting to the estate of a Jewish art dealer who was forced to flee the Nazis before later becoming a success in the Canadian art world.

Max Stern's family once ran one of the most prominent art galleries in Germany, but was forced to sell it in 1937 and leave the country.

Eventually, Stern settled in Montreal and began the long process of rebuilding the art business begun by his father and seeking the return of the paintings.

The oil painting The Virgin with Child, attributed to the Master of Flemalle — an unidentified Flemish artist from the early 1400s — was turned over by the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart at a ceremony Tuesday at the Canadian Embassy in Berlin.

The painting was sold by the Stern family in order to obtain an exit permit for Max Stern's mother to leave Germany.

It is one of 10 pieces from their original collection that have now been returned to his estate, overseen by Concordia University in Montreal since Stern's death in 1987.

"With more than 400 paintings yet to be recovered, the most immediate challenge lies in encouraging a number of other museums currently in possession of Stern paintings to follow the lead of the Staatsgalerie," Alan Shepard, president of Concordia University, said in a statement Tuesday.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

One of 10

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Politicians keep up blitz for Keystone XL

U.S. trips. Minister of natural resources and Sask. premier make their pitches stateside

Federal Minister of Natural Resources Joe Oliver THE CANADIAN PRESS

Less than a week after the U.S. State Department all but dismissed the climate concerns dogging TransCanada's Keystone XL pipeline, two high-profile Canadian politicians headed stateside Tuesday to push once again for approval.

The pitch from Natural Resources Minister Joe Oliver contained a nugget of news for his audience as he assured them that long-awaited federal regulations on Canada's oil and gas sector were on the horizon.

"Once the federal regulations are in place, Canada will be one of a very few oil producers in the world with national binding regulations on its oil and gas sector," he said in his pitch to the Chicago Council on Global Affairs. The government is aiming to have those federal regulations ready by mid-year.

The new rules would seek to curb the sector's greenhouse emissions in order for Canada to meet a 2020 target for a 17 per cent overall cut. Rules are already set for the transportation and coal-fired electricity industries but they only take Canada halfway to the goal.

Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall, meanwhile, began a four-day visit to the U.S. capital that includes meetings with several top officials, including an assistant secretary of state on international environmental affairs and the majority leader of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Wall, too, will urge Americans to approve the pipeline. But he'll also tout his province's green initiatives, in particular its recent $1.4-billion investment in a clean-coal project in Estevan, Sask. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Try to enjoy it — spring unlikely to be hot

According to The Weather Network, the average winter conditions experienced across the country will give way to a typical spring in the coming weeks. Director of meteorology Chris Scott said spring temperatures are expected to hover near seasonal norms in most parts of the country. Residents of southern Ontario, Quebec and parts of Atlantic Canada may feel a little more warmth than their counterparts in the West. Stable ocean temperatures in the Pacific also suggest average levels of precipitation for most of the country. Scott said this year's forecast stands in stark contrast to the previous spring, when several of Canada's major cities recorded historic highs. JEFF STOKOE/RED DEER ADVOCATE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Vancouver

Sex-trade worker tied up, dragged behind van

Vancouver police are hunting for a man suspected of beating a sex-trade worker who was tied up and dragged by a van.

Police say a 42-year-old woman was picked up in the Downtown Eastside and driven to a secluded area, where she was attacked.

Several 911 callers then reported seeing her dragged down the street before she managed to partially free herself and jump from the moving van.

Police conducted an extensive search, but were unable to locate the suspect, who police say may have an Australian accent.

His vehicle is described as a white panel van with roof racks.

The woman remains in hospital, where she is recovering from a head injury and extensive abrasions. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Target's here, but the price isn't always right

Doubtful discounts.
Shoppers at three new Ontario stores find the savings don't match what's on offer in U.S.

Employees welcome the first shoppers who lined up for the new Target store in Guelph on Tuesday. The company is expected to open between 125 and 135 locations in Canada. DAVE CHIDLEY/THE CANADIAN PRESS

The long-awaited arrival of U.S. discount giant Target means Canadians can now get their hands on the famed bull's-eye brand's wares without crossing the border — though the savings here might not equal those down south.

The retail chain, which opened its doors on Tuesday in three communities west of Toronto, has said Canadian customers will likely see a difference in pricing compared to items carried in its U.S. stores, with the company focused on being "competitively priced" with retailers in Canada.

A spokeswoman for Target Canada couldn't say exactly how that will play out on shelves in the newly launched Ontario stores in Guelph, Fergus and Milton or the dozens more locations the company expects to open across the country.

Pricing depends on a number of factors and it's difficult to give case-by-case examples or even narrow it down to categories of products more likely to warrant higher prices, Lisa Gibson said on Tuesday.

"In certain cases, the prices will actually be completely on par with U.S. prices and in some cases there might be some differences, but ... our overall goal is to make sure we're competitive with the marketplace," she said, adding the company is also bringing in a five per cent reward program from the U.S.

At the Guelph store, a 2.95-litre bottle of Tide laundry detergent was priced at $15.99 Tuesday, compared with $11.99 US on Target's American website. The same product was listed for $15.99 on the Canadian Tire site.

A bottle of Aveeno moisturizer cost $7.49 at the Guelph store, while the lotion was marked down to $5.99 US on the U.S. website, down from the regular price of $6.29. On the Shoppers Drug Mart website, it was priced at $8.99.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Dow wows

Stock index surges past all-time high

The Dow Jones industrial average closed at a record on Tuesday, beating the previous high it set in October 2007, before the financial crisis and the Great Recession. The index rose 126 points, or one per cent, to 14,253, beating its previous record by 89 points. In fact, it is up nearly nine per cent this year, capping a remarkable comeback.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Market Minute

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97.28¢ (-0.02¢)

TSX
12,736.04 (+28.63)

OIL
$90.82 US (+70¢)

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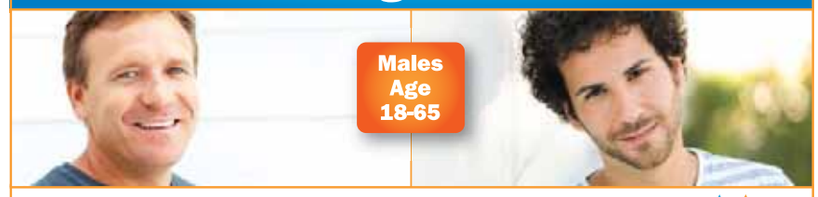

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DO PRICEY JEANS COME WITH DEEP POCKETS?

JUST SAYIN'

Mike Benhaim
Guest columnist

During a recent trip to Montreal, I found myself engaged in a fascinating discussion with a 30-year-old metrosexual male who was passionately extolling the virtues of the $450 pair of jeans he wore.

Now, I'm not one to dismiss the importance of personal style and presentation, but if I were Forrest Gump, I'd say, "I've worn lots o' jeans." While I can easily recognize an obvious difference in quality, I saw nothing that great in this particular pair.

I admitted to having owned a few pair of jeans for which I paid too much, even on sale. But I have never found them to improve as much with time as I've been told a good pair should.

Furthermore, $450 is not the most shocking price tag around.

It seems that even Ye Olde Levi's Shoppe now produces a hand-sewn, heavy-denim product that retails for $500.

Apparently, these magical pants will create the illusion that even the oddest-shaped individual is actually fit.

Keeping an open mind, I began to pay attention to brand-name jeans, such as Diesel and 7 For All Mankind, that ranged between $350 and $900. Yeah, you heard me! And that's nothing.

APO Jeans will sell you a custom product with pockets lined in pure silk, a perfectly polished silver zipper and a real diamond button for $4,000!

Why do I get the feeling there's a Kardashian behind this somewhere?

People of Earth, I beg you: For the sake of the children, "Stop the madness!"

They're jeans!

Jeans were meant to be comfortable and casual. The coolest ones are faded and frayed at the edges. They've been worn out in all the right places and can be passed on to someone else when your ass grows out of them.

Sure, you should expect to pay more now than you did in the '80s, but please.

There are plenty of good-quality, excellent-fitting jeans available for under $100, and if you think they make you look fat then — you're fat! Work on that instead of putting all the pressure on your clothing.

Now, I can always forgive the feminine whimsy (within reason) if the result is extraordinary, but men: I speak on behalf of guys more and less macho than myself when I suggest finding a pair of jeans that feel good and spending $20 getting them altered to your liking. That's it.

If your girlfriend wants to play dress-up with you, as some women will do, and buys you a pair of the ol' rhinestone cowgirls, return them for a cheaper pair and buy her a very nice dinner with the change. If you don't, you'll be scheduled the next day for a mani-pedi and full-body manscaping that sounds much nicer than it feels.

Now, I can hardly wait for all the stylish clubgoers I've offended to tweet the cheap out of me, but I ask that the rest of you find this online and tell me where you buy YOUR jeans and how much you pay for them.

Just sayin'.

Read more of Just Sayin' at metronews.ca

ZOOM

Sally the camel had 1 maple leaf

MARTIN LIPMAN/CANADIAN MUSEUM OF NATURE/HANDOUT/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Fossils offer climate clues

Dr. Natalia Rybczynski examines the fossil bones of the High Arctic camel laid out in a lab at the Canadian Museum of Nature.

The fossil evidence consists of about 30 bone fragments, which together form part of a limb bone of a camel. Found on Ellesmere Island, Nunavut, this is the northernmost discovery of camels in the Arctic, about 1,200 kilometres further north than the Yukon camel. The camel lived about three and a half million years ago, when the region supported a boreal-type forest.

Back when this camel was browsing leaves and shoots, the entire global climate averaged about two or three degrees warmer than it is now.

That's about as much a difference as scientists say the Earth can undergo today without catastrophic changes. THE CANADIAN PRESS

An illustration of the High Arctic camel on Ellesmere Island during the Pliocene warm period, about three and a half million years ago. HANDOUT

Clickbait

What was the worst hashtag fail so far? We'll let you be the judge.

#susanalbumparty
In November 2012, the PR team behind Britain's Susan Boyle was relentlessly mocked for their use of the 'susanalbumparty' hashtag.

#RIMjobs
In what will likely stand as the greatest Canadian hashtag fail, the company formerly known as Research in Motion chose to court prospective employees via the 'RIMjobs' hashtag.

#McDstories
Last year, McDonald's asked its customers to share memories of dining at the fast-food joint via a 'McDstories' hashtag. Sooner than you could say 'happy meal,' the tag was flooded with accounts of finding fingernails in Big Macs and other sordid stories.

#Rogers1Number
In another Canadian example, Rogers paid Twitter to keep the 'Rogers1Number' tag atop the site's list of trending topics last March. Of course, the hashtag allowed customers to publicize their complaints about poor service and perceived price-gouging.

#Hobbitch
Earlier this year, a Swiss company used the 'Hobbitch' hashtag to promote the latest installment in the Lord of the Rings movie franchise. It's a case of lost in translation, as .ch is the official domain name for Switzerland.

Letters

Re: Horsemeat big business in Alberta, published March 4.

The article indicates that only horses at their end of life are slaughtered.

This is not true! MANY YOUNG HEALTHY horses are slaughtered because the owners either don't know the possible outcome of taking their horse to an auction, or don't care.

There are also some irresponsible (using nice language here) horse breeders who purposely 'over breed'. They keep what they consider the cream of the crop and send the rest to auction.

Pat Rollock, Calgary

What is wrong with the world today? Can we not draw a line on which animals we will 'slaughter' and consume?

I am confused by the poll and growing acceptance of Canadians to consume horsemeat. Would you stand by and allow your cats and dogs to be slaughtered and then be eaten?

Ruth S., Whitby

I was shocked by the article on horse meat. The reporter did not do enough research, the facts are that bute has been found in horsemeat often and it causes cancer in humans.

Cindy Cardy, London

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A century of Oz-inspired entertainment

IN FOCUS
Richard Crouse
scene@metronews.ca

When New Girl star Zooey Deschanel was two years old she watched The Wizard of Oz every day. "I had a hard time understanding that I couldn't go into the film," she said, "because it felt so real to me."

She's not alone. It is one of the most watched and universally adored Hollywood films ever.

This weekend Disney hopes to add to the legacy of the original film with Oz the Great and Powerful, a Sam Raimi directed prequel starring James Franco and Mila Kunis. Ever wondered why the wicked witch was so wicked? Or how the wizard became the wizard? With a click of its ruby slippers this movie fills in the blanks. It's not the first movie to try and woo an audience based on Oz and its citizens.

1910's The Wonderful Wizard of Oz was the first Baum book to hit the screen. Almost seven decades later, two very different musicals were inspired by the Oz folks.

20th Century Oz is a 1976 Australian rock musical that reimagines the classic story set in 1970s Australia. Two years later director Sidney Lumet adapted the Broadway hit The Wiz for the screen, casting Motown superstars Diana Ross as Dorothy and Michael Jackson as The Scarecrow. Although it was, at the time, the most expensive film musical ever made, it wasn't a hit in theatres.

This film image released by Disney Enterprises shows James Franco as Oz, left, and the character Finley, voiced by Zach Braff, in a scene from Oz the Great and Powerful. DISNEY ENTERPRISES/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Oz prequel brings Braff back to a 'magical place'

Oz the Great and Powerful. Director Sam Raimi 'at his finest' says the former Scrubs star

RICHARD CROUSE
scene@metronews.ca

Years ago I asked one of the original Wizard of Oz munchkins to explain the movie's enduring appeal.

"Everybody can enjoy it," said Karl Slover who was just two feet tall when he played the first trumpeter. "There's no filthy language in it. I don't see no bikinis! No nudist colonies! Kids can watch it and parents don't have to worry because there's nothing bad in there."

I recently asked Zach Braff the same question in an interview to promote Oz the Great and Powerful, a prequel to the most beloved movie of all time.

"It reminds us of our childhood," says the former Scrubs star, "and it reminds us of this magical place where crazy things happen. It is innocent and it is pure and it is amazing that it holds up. It was made in 1939, most kids don't see other movies made in 1939."

The new flick, co-staring James Franco, Mila Kunis, Rachel Weisz and Michelle Wiliams, is a state-of-the-art film, but it's something that has been gestating for some time.

"I heard that Walt Disney always wanted to make an Oz movie," he says. "There's 13 books, so why not go back to that world and tell it from a 2013 perspective."

The new film echoes the original, starting with black and white scenes shot in Kansas before moving to the eye-popping fantasy world of Oz. The movie's modern twist is the addition of high tech tricks to make your eyes and ears dance. Braff calls the film's visual and audio tweaks — increasing the depth of the 3D and adding in surround sound for the Oz scenes, for example — "Sam Raimi at his finest."

Raimi, the director behind the Evil Dead movies and a little franchise called Spider-Man, was the big reason Braff signed on to the project.

"I heard Sam wanted to meet me in his office. That's a good call to get."

Braff, who made his directorial debut on the 2004 indie film Garden State, calls Raimi a "wonderful mentor who let me watch this whole process." Even on his days off the actor would go to the set to learn about big budget filmmaking from watching the old pro work on Oz's enormous sets.

"Sam's the biggest mensch on earth. The guy's a saint. He's too good to be true."

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Tweet. Funny and fictitious, our favourite fake accounts

Fake Twitter accounts have been around since the birth of Twitter — way back in 2010, an Abe "Barney Miller" Vigoda imposter used the service to deny reports of his death ("Hamsters are cute and fuzzy. I'm alive!!"). Our interview with The Tweet of God (@thetweetofgod) got us thinking about the best ones.

Michael Haneke
@Michael_Haneke
The Austrian Oscar winner (Amour) is known for his severe films that feature torture, shocking deaths and Nazi themes (he rarely smiles in photos either). So of course he'd tweet about his "stinky" cat, ending every missive with an "lol."
Sample tweet: well dun 2 argo!!1! @adamsandler can i has my magic remote contrl bak? i need it 4 sumthng quik lol

Zooey Asks Siri
@ZooeySiri
She's a dork. She's adorable. She's adorkable! Zooey Deschanel is the perfect target, then, for this account, which imagines her hipster musings, spoken to Siri, just like in the Apple commercial.
Sample tweets: Siri, do windows ever feel bashful? Siri, what if hairs don't want to be cut? Siri, since I've never seen a koala bear, how do I know they exist?

Miguel Bloombito
@ElBloombito
New York's Mayor Michael Bloomberg often throws a little Spanish into news conferences. Unfortunately, New York's Mayor Michael Bloomberg cannot speak Spanish.
Sample tweet: Cuidado! El sñowado que fallingo y makero el calle muy slipperyo. Necesito los skis!

Fake Michael Bay
@michael_bay_
BOOM! The Transformers director would naturally be into blowing up dogs, deep frying everything and spending a fortune on rhinos. Be warned though, he tweets as often as he makes good movies.
Sample tweet: Whoa, sorry guys. Been sitting around in my boxers, drinking Bartles & Jaymes, lighting Black Cats since August. Did Romney win?
METRO

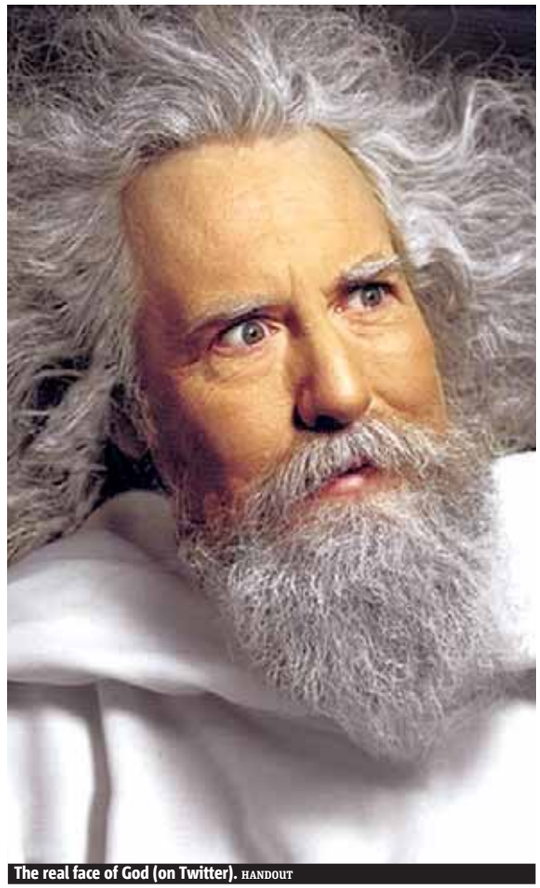
Exclusive from God: Pope was a IV out of X

@TheTweetOfGod.
Metro tweets with God about the search for the next pope

KIERON MONKS
Metro World News

As the cardinals arrive in Vatican City to find a new pope to replace the recently resigned Benedict XVI, we caught up with God, a.k.a. David Javerbaum, the 11-time Emmy winning comedian who runs the popular @TheTweetOfGod Twitter account and author of The Last Testament: A Memoir by God.

Popes don't resign — has ex-Benedict incurred your wrath by doing this or did you fire him?


The real face of God (on Twitter). HANDOUT

I'm not angry. In the end it came down to "creative differences," in that I am infinitely creative and he is different.

In his final speech he said at tough times "it seemed the Lord was sleeping." Were you ducking his calls?
No, he was right. I was sleeping. It was the seventh day of the week. How does he not know what I do on the seventh day? #genesis-1bennyboy

What score would you give his reign?
I'd give it a IV out of X.

Are you concerned about the vacuum now he's gone? Who will you speak through on Earth now?
I will continue to speak through the mentally ill and/or con men, and by "and" I mean conservative Republicans.

How is recruitment for a replacement going — and who would be your ultimate fantasy pope?
No comment on who the new Pope might be. Obviously My fantasy would be 'Poprah'. But she won't return My calls.

The pope had a strong social media game — how will you bring the Vatican more in line with the digital era?
It's pretty hard to bring the "digital era" to a place where, as the names of the Pope indicate, they don't even have digits.

Will you be reclaiming the Popemobile?
Not reclaiming, but fixing up. I'm giving it racing stripes, lowriders, and an engine that runs on holy water and Jesus-body.

Off topic but who are you most keen to send to hell?
My bill collector. Satan owes me 500 years' back rent.

A funny thing happens when you tell kids they matter. They believe you.

An alarming 40,000 kids drop out of high school every year. Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada are committed to changing that. They provide a safe and supportive place where kids can develop confidence and life skills. They offer programs like *Rogers Raising the Grade*™ to help kids with their studies. The Club is a place where kids can drop in, so they're less likely to drop out.

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Billy Corgan, second from left, steps into the ring for an ad for furniture store Walter E. Smithe. HANDOUT

Billy Corgan, the pro wrestler?

Ad. Chicago furniture store taps alt-rock legend for campaign

Billy Corgan might be best known as the frontman for The Smashing Pumpkins. But recently, he's been dabbling in his other passion, professional wrestling.

Fans got a little peek into Corgan's wrestling endeavours through an ad for Chicago furniture store Walter E. Smithe called Billy Corgan's Musical Chairs. The commercial also features some of the wrestlers from Resistance Pro, a professional wrestling promotion company that Corgan started, as well as the singer himself.

Tim Smithe, the chief marketing officer for Walter E. Smithe, came up with the idea for the ad with his brothers. He was confident he could get Corgan to sign on, even though he realized getting the Smashing Pumpkins star was a "long shot."

"I know a 'second cousin' of Billy, and tried that angle a few years ago, and it went nowhere," he admitted to Metro World News.

It wasn't until Smithe and Corgan met on Mancow, a talk show in Chicago, that he was able to make his pitch in person.

"There was good, simple chemistry right away, and one thing lead to another during the commercial break," Smithe said.

"And then a few days later, someone from his staff called and said Billy is ready to 'let the wrestling begin.' My brothers and I were thrilled."

Smithe said that Corgan was "chill, intelligent and confident" during the shoot.

"On the set he was down to earth, light-hearted, and loves his wrestling team from the bottom of his heart," Smithe said.

Though there was a script, it was mostly improvised on the scene. The Resistance Pro wrestlers took on the Smithe brothers for two hours just to get 30 seconds of footage. When his brother Mark Smithe got body slammed, it actually knocked the wind out of him.

Corgan even told Smithe that he didn't shove him hard enough to be realistic during the early takes.

"So I really gave it to him on the take we chose," Smithe said.

Smithe hopes that Millenials who grew up listening to the Smashing Pumpkins will be intrigued by furniture from Walter E. Smithe.

"We use our own brand of humour to create conversations and generate buzz in the marketplace here in Chicago. We believe that through commercials that include pop culture parodies, we have been successful in getting Chicagoans to talk about our brand," he said. METRO

See online

Watch The Smashing Pumpkins frontman try his talents in the ring, online at metronews.ca

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METRO DAY AT H&M

Road a lonely place for Tame Impala's Parker

Aussie breakouts. It took two solitary years to craft Lonerism, but the band's new album is brightly melodic

Kevin Parker, mastermind behind the Australian psychedelic rock outfit Tame Impala, spent two years in near-complete solitude while crafting the band's aptly titled second album Lonerism.

He cherished it. And then he went on tour — where he was surrounded by people pretty much all the time — he remembered what loneliness really felt like.

"It's called Lonerism, but it's really not about physical isolation — it's really about being around other people and trying to connect with (them) and having trouble doing so," Parker said in a telephone interview.

"When I was a genuine loner, and really just sort of hung out by myself, I was never really affected by other people. I didn't really feel like a loner. But when we started touring a lot with the first album, and being thrust in front of people ... that's when you feel like a loner, when you're having such a hard time connecting with the rest of the world."

And yet, through his brightly melodic, strategically smeared psych-pop, Parker has been connecting in a pretty notable way.

Most of Tame Impala's upcoming dates — including shows Saturday at Toronto's Kool Haus and March 11 at Montreal's Metropolis — are sold out.

This after receiving laudatory critical praise as deeply stacked as the band's multi-layered synth tracks. Lonerism was featured high on lists of the best albums of 2012 by publications including Pitchfork, the Guardian, Mojo, Filter and NME, which named Tame Impala's sophomore effort its top record of the year.

It's a relief to Parker, if only because the exhausting process behind Lonerism didn't exactly leave him brimming with new ideas.

"I feel like I kind of blew my brain out with this album," he said. "I didn't realize how much I was ... getting more obsessed with recording, with making the songs and making them better. When I finished this one, it was such a load off my shoulders."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Life and death

"Once it's finished, it's finished, and it belongs to the rest of the world. It doesn't belong to me anymore. ... So when I'm working on it, that's the real life of it for me."

Kevin Parker, on his lengthy creative process

Australian band Tame Impala. MATTHEW SAVILLE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Boy Scouts Jamboree. Carly pulls out of show over exclusion of gays

Carly Rae Jepsen is cancelling her performance at the Boy Scouts of America Jamboree because of the scouts' exclusion of gays.

Jepsen said Tuesday on Twitter that "as an artist who believes in equality for all people" she's pulling out of the July gathering. The event, held once every four years, is expected to draw more than 45,000.

Rock band Train also warned that it won't appear unless the organization stops barring participation by gay scouts or adult leaders. Train said on its website that it was unaware of the policy before agreeing to perform and that the organization must now make "the right decision."

BSA director of publicity Deron Smith said the BSA appreciates "everyone's right to express an opinion" and remains focused on staging a great jamboree.

Carly Rae Jepsen GETTY IMAGES

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Family is 'nuclear centre' of hit TV series Homeland: Patinkin

Watch it from the beginning. Season 1 premieres on Bravo Wednesday night

Actor Mandy Patinkin did heaps of research for his role as a senior CIA agent in the hit TV series Homeland, about a released POW Marine who returns home to his family amid suspicions he's been "turned" by al-Qaida.

But it wasn't until he met with an actual CIA veteran and his daughters and talked to them about growing up under the cloak of spy operations in the Middle East that he fully understood the kernel of the show.

"The minute he mentioned his daughters, I just realized, instantly — after all the books I read about CIA and spies and intrigue — it was a story about a father and a daughter, it was a story about a family. And that's the nuclear centre, why it's so popular all over the world, in my opinion," Patinkin said.

Homeland's second season recently aired on Showtime in the U.S. In Canada, it's currently showing on Super Channel, which plans to debut season three with the U.S. premiere on Sept. 29.

Meanwhile, season one premieres Wednesday at 10 p.m. ET on Bravo in Canada.

Baking with the CIA

"It asks some pretty profound questions and it puts them in a cupcake of heavy-duty psychological thriller stuff."

Actor Mandy Patinkin, on Homeland

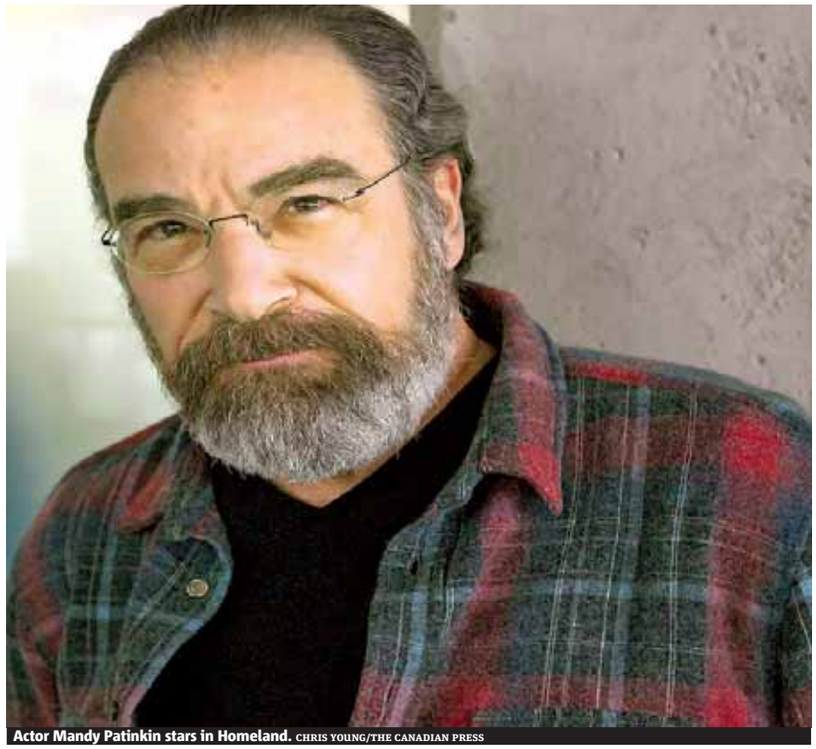
Patinkin plays Saul Berenson, the CIA's Middle East Division Chief emeritus and mentor to Carrie Mathison (Golden Globe winner Claire Danes), a bipolar agent who sometimes breaks the rules and uses a sixth sense to capture her targets in a post-911 world.

Carrie was first to get the tip that Sgt. Nicholas Brody (Golden Globe winner Damian Lewis) may have been "turned," and she goes to desperate lengths to learn the truth.

24 writers Howard Gordon and Alex Gansa developed the gripping series that features many plot twists and has viewers constantly questioning who is a double agent.

"One of the things I love about Homeland is it asks you to listen to your enemy," said Patinkin, who also got a Golden Globe nomination for his role on the show.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



Actor Mandy Patinkin stars in Homeland. CHRIS YOUNG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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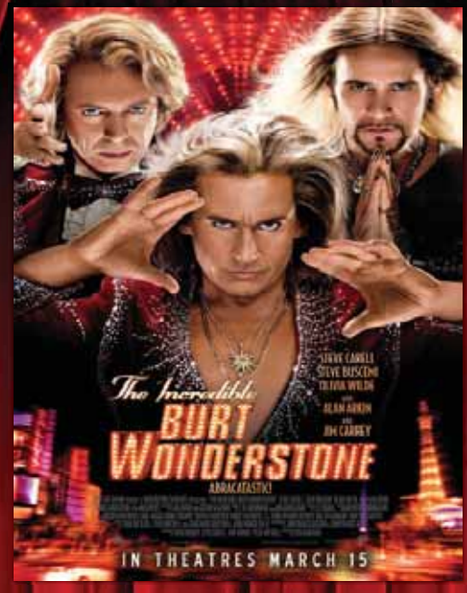

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The Word

What's going on with Kim's mat wardrobe?

THE WORD
Dorothy Robinson
scene@metronews.ca

As a woman who has grown a baby in her uterus, I know how hard it is to find good maternity clothing. So I can relate to Kim Kardashian's problem of finding a flattering pregnancy wardrobe. But I'm not sure why she's continuing to dress like she isn't pregnant.

I'm guessing her fashion-plate boyfriend, Kanye West, has something to do with it.

Case in point: as soon as Kardashian started to show, she decided to don this mesh-leather-feather-pants ensemble that made her resemble a motorcycle-riding ostrich. Then she wore this ill-fitting white ensemble on Saturday, which is made for a much taller, much less knocked-up person.

I'm not saying you can't look nice while pregnant. I'm just saying you should probably leave the high fashion at home.

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Swift: back up those rumours, people

Taylor Swift has some news for everyone keeping track of her love life. "If you want some big revelation, since 2010 I have dated exactly two people," she tells Vanity Fair, referring to high schooler Conor Kennedy and One Direction member Harry Styles. "The fact that there are slide shows of a dozen guys that I either hugged on a red carpet or met for lunch or wrote a song with, it's just kind of ridiculous." But she doesn't let all the talk get to her. "One of these things I say to myself to calm myself down when I feel like it's all too much ... if there's a pregnancy rumour, people will find out it's not true when you wind up not pregnant," she says.

Bieber booed in London

Justin Bieber's troublesome stay in London continued this week when he got a late start at his show at the O2 Arena, courting boos from an angry, impatient audience, according to the BBC. "Last night I was scheduled after three opening acts to go on stage at 9:35, not 8:30, but because of some technical issues i got on at 10:10, so I was 40 minutes late to (the) stage. There is no excuse for that and I apologize for anyone we upset," he tweeted.

Justin Bieber

Twitter

@SarahSilverman
BACKFIRE: This AdvilPM is giving me the dancing bug

@Rosie
On my way to film SMASH — love that show so much ... I am playing me — luckily I have done a lot of research ;)

@MARLONLWAYANS
Balling hard in my solitude of peace ... Whatever that means

METRO DAY AT H&M

If you are Cuba-bound this March Break, a day trip to Havana is a must. For a true taste of this time-warped capital, be sure to visit these must-see spots.

ON THE MOVE
Loren Christie
life@metronews.ca

5 Hot spots in Havana

Take a vintage car ride

The country is home to approximately 60,000 classic American automobiles that industrious Cubans have kept running since the 1959 revolution. Although a very walkable city, an hour long tour is a great way to get oriented. Ask the driver to cruise along the Malecon, an eight kilometre boulevard stretching alongside the Atlantic Ocean. Either arrange in advance through Gran Car or find a driver in Parque Central.

Hang out in Parque Central

The buzz created by masses of Cubans and tourists passing through the park is infectious. The building housing the Cuban National Ballet is stunning. And no visit is complete without a photo in front of the Capitolio Nacional. It was completed in 1929 as a tribute to its sister building in Washington, D.C.

Soak up the atmosphere of a retro hotel

Built on a hill above the Malecon, the grand Hotel Nacionale's 1930s tiled lobby and colonnaded veranda looking out to the sea is right out of a movie. The heart of Old Havana is sprinkled with smaller hotels, like Hotel Raquel, which have painstakingly restored their interior courtyards into an oasis of luxury. All are worth a peek.

Get a glimpse of glory at Plaza Vieja

Check out the Plaza Vieja. It has been undergoing a decade-long restoration and gives a glimpse of what Havana could look like if returned to its former glory. Make sure you also wander the narrow, congested, delightfully intriguing, cobbled surrounding streets of the old city. The UNESCO World Heritage site contains almost 1,000 buildings of historic importance.

Try a mojito, a la Hemingway

El Floridita and La Bodeguita del Medio are the two most famous ones, largely due to their affiliation with author Ernest Hemingway. Word is he preferred the daiquiris at the former and mojitos at the later. I tried both and agree. In addition to pouring over the throwback decor, the frequent appearance of live bands gives an opportunity for a taste of the vibrant Cuban music.

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Coral reef restoration program in the Dominican Republic. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Seeds of hope for coral reefs

Conservation. Could fast-growing coral save the Caribbean's rapidly depleting ocean reefs?

Mats of algae and seaweed have shrouded the once thick coral in shallow reefs off Jamaica's north coast. Warm ocean waters have bleached out the coral, and in a cascade of ecological decline, the sea urchins and plant-eating reef fish have mostly vanished, replaced by snails and worms that bore through coral skeletons.

Now, off the shores of Jamaica, as well as in Caribbean islands from Bonaire to St. Croix, conservationists are planting fast-growing coral species to try and turn things around by "seeding" reefs. The strategy has doubters, with one expert joking that prayer might be as effective, but conservationists say the problem is so catastrophic that inaction is not an option. According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, live coral coverage on Caribbean reefs is down to an average of just eight per cent, from 50 per cent in the 1970s.

Lenford Dacosta grew up in the north Jamaican fishing village of Oracabessa Bay and spear-fished the waters for most of his 46 years. Now he is part of a crew that tends to a small coral nursery in a fish sanctuary, hoping to revitalize the reef that sustained his village, whose shoreline is now dominated by ritzy resorts.

"I used to think that children would only hear about coral reefs and fish in books," said Dacosta, expressing hope that his work will yield fruit.

Seascape Caribbean, the fledgling company that employs Dacosta and touts itself as the region's first and only private coral restoration business, uses low-tech coral nurseries consisting of buoys and weights with small fragments of staghorn coral suspended from them on strings. The fragments grow on the strings until bits of tannish coral with the beginnings of antler-like branches are ready to be planted onto reefs. Other specialists grow coral fragments on concrete pedestals placed on the seabed.

Advocates say the reef restoration work, focused on the region's fast-growing but threatened staghorn and elkhorn coral species, can boost rates of recovery and improve the outlook for coral. The efforts will never resurrect the vibrant reefs of 50 years ago, they acknowledge, but they believe they can help preserve some of a reef's functionality and beauty.

"Coral cover is getting a little better here and I believe it will keep improving in the gardened areas," said Andrew Ross, a Canadian marine biologist and entrepreneur who founded Seascape Caribbean.

Reef-building coral is a tiny polyp-like animal that builds a calcium-carbonate shell around itself and survives in a symbiotic relationship with certain types of algae. Its reefs serve as vital spawning and feeding grounds for numerous marine creatures. It comes in some 1,500 known species, ranging from soft, undulating fans to those with hard skeletons that form reef bases.

But across the globe, reefs that have proven resilient for thousands of years are in serious decline, degraded by overfishing, pollution, coastal development and warming ocean waters. And threats to coral are only expected to intensify as a result of climate change and ocean acidification due to greenhouse gases.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Reefs around the world are in serious decline. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Reefs in real trouble

The stakes couldn't be higher along the Caribbean Sea, which has nearly 20,720 square kilometres of coral reefs. The tropical islands' iconic reefs protect fragile coastlines by absorbing energy from waves during hurricanes and normal conditions. Financially, the Caribbean has a multibillion-dollar beach tourism and commercial fishing economy. In Jamaica alone, reef fisheries support up to 20,000 fishermen. Caribbean coral has deteriorated so badly in recent decades that a new report from a team of international scientists says that the rocky structures of the reefs are on the threshold of gradual erosion.

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Try exploring Costa Rica from a sailing yacht. DIANE TIERNEY

Keep on cruisin'

On the cruise, you'll also visit Isla De Colba, a UNESCO World Heritage site and the largest island in central America. The waters are teeming with marine life in this biologically-intense region. It is the beginning of the Cordilera mountain chain that includes the Galapagos islands.

Bahia Drake is believed to be a port visited by Sir Francis Drake in the 16th century. The remote coastline includes private coves, beautiful beaches and rocky crags. The main attraction is Corcovado National Park. Here you'll see red-eyed tree frogs, white-lipped peccaries and scarlet macaws. The ocean is just as entertaining, with humpback whales, marlins, dolphins, turtles and manta rays.

Although Windstar ships are small by cruise ship standards – the Star, Spirit and Surf range from 150 to 300 passengers – you won't be roughing it. Windstar recently spent $18 million renovating them. The ships now have chic nautical style with highly polished brass and glossy wood finishes. The Star has a small pool, hot tub, water sports platform, spa, exercise room, Internet café, library, dining room, bars and lounges.

Like Columbus, but with a yacht

Go wild. Taking a cruise on The Star is a great way to see some of the more untamed regions in Costa Rica

DIANE TIERNEY
life@metronews.ca

I learned a neat trick from a Howler monkey in Costa Rica. I was walking along a nature trail in Golfito National Park when the mosquitoes decided to attack. Although I had sunscreen on, I forgot to apply bug spray.

I noticed a monkey in the trees rubbing her arms with leaves and asked my trail guide what she was doing. He said she was coating her skin with the Piper plant. It has a citrus-like scent that the mosquitoes dislike. Clever monkey, I'll keep that in mind.

There are many fascinating wonders in the rainforest, which is why so many travellers visit this untamed destination. During this nature walk, hummingbirds that were the size of baseballs whizzed past my head and gigantic butterflies floated innocently from fern to flower. Huge bamboo trees towered over us and delicate pink orchids were tempting to pluck.

After we reached the magnificent waterfall that was our goal and reward, we emerged from the jungle to see four yellow-breasted toucans perched in the treetops and then dive-bomb into the bushes.

It's best to explore designated trails with a guide. Just don't be surprised if he's carrying a machete. Let him lead the way in case he sees a snake.

To visit Golfito, I sailed with Windstar Cruises on one of their three motorized sailing yachts, called the Star. Since their ships can sail under wind power most of the time thanks to their huge masts, I thought this kind of cruise was much more appropriate for such an environmentally-sensitive region. There are only 150 passengers on board the Star and the ship's small size makes off-beat ports easily accessible. Passengers also get to know each other well and it gave us all the feeling of being explorers like Columbus or Drake.

As well as Golfito, we sailed to San Blas, Panama — accessible thanks to the famous canal for being a 80-kilometre short-cut to the Pacific Ocean. This engineering marvel takes about 10 hours to pass through.

San Blas is a chain of about 400 islands inhabited by the Kuna Indians who have governed the province since the 1920s. Their distinctive dress, music and dance make you feel like you just stepped into the pages of National Geographic.

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Job hunting? Lose the white socks

Suit yourself!

Formal interview attire is preferred by one-third of CIOs

OLIVIA HOSKIN
TalentEgg.ca

When it comes to information technology interviews, interviewees can never be too formal.

Students and recent grads looking to become IT professionals may want to trade in their casual interview attire for something more suitable: a suit. The statistics don't lie; in a recent Robert Half Technology survey, 33 per cent of CIOs said a suit was the most appropriate attire for someone interviewing for an IT job. Additionally, 29 per cent favoured tailored separates, while another 29 per cent prefer khakis and collared shirts.

It takes only a few seconds to form a first impression, and for a short interview, those seconds may make or break your chances of being hired.

Here are a few technology job interview attire guidelines:

Be comfortable

You want to be as confident and comfy as possible! If you are physically uncomfortable, this will show in your behaviour during the interview. Women, this means saving those stilettos for the club, not the office.

Don't overlook the small things

Make sure your shoes match your belt (or purse), and never, ever wear white socks! Ensure you are wrinkle and stain-free, well groomed and clean. If you are unsure, ask a professional ... or your mom.

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Mama knows...

Ensure you are wrinkle and stain-free, well groomed and clean. If you are unsure, ask a professional ... or your mom.

Olivia Hoskin

Everything in moderation

Choose one "thing" that interviewers can remember you by, like a bow in your hair or a uniquely-coloured dress shirt, but ultimately, the interview is about your qualities and skills, not your fashion sense. Remember to avoid overwhelming perfumes/colognes, excessive or inappropriately-coloured makeup and distracting jewelry.

Shut it off!

This is an obvious step that if forgotten, is often an immediate deal-breaker. Skip the silent setting and turn your phone off when you have interviews. Be present and distraction free.

Webcam interviews are still interviews

To ensure that you are distraction-free for webcam interviews, book a study room at school for an hour or two. This ensures a quiet and distraction-free zone. If you do not have access to a private room, just be sure to dress professionally from head to toe.

TALENTEGG.CA IS CANADA'S LEADING JOB SITE AND ONLINE CAREER RESOURCE FOR COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND RECENT GRADUATES.

Many a meet-and-greet. Tackling the tech job interview takes time

You got an interview. Congratulations!

It's likely you searched for jobs on websites, leveraged your network and wowed a recruiter with your resumé and cover letter. But you're not done selling yourself just yet.

University of Waterloo career advisor Tanya Gillert says tech graduates can expect to be screened by an in-house recruiter or a member of the company's HR department before one or two technical phone screens and up to four on-site interviews with the employer.

"In an interview, recruiters are determining if they like you, if you know your stuff and if you are passionate about your field and specialty," she says. "Employers want to know if an applicant is adaptable, flexible and productive."

Here's a list of Gillert's top tips on how to ace the technology job interview and get the job.

Know the employer

Research the company's structure, history and mission. Learn about what the company sells, the clients they target and how they compete in their industry. Find out what motivates management and employees.

How can you tell an interviewer that you'll fit in seamlessly with the company's culture if you know nothing about them?

Know the position

Employers will list the skills, knowledge and qualifications they expect someone they hire to possess. Read the job listing and show them that you meet their requirements, Gillert says.

You can expect technical questions to be tailored to the role. Be prepared to write code, talk about code and find any errors in code quickly.

Do your research

How can you tell an interviewer that you'll fit in seamlessly with the company's culture if you know nothing about them?

Tanya Gillert
Career advisor

Practise that pitch. Attend interview workshops, speak to a career advisor or participate in a mock interview. ISTOCK

Know yourself

Know your strengths and weaknesses. Practise coding and solving problems in front of people. Be prepared to answer the types of questions Gillert says technology students can expect to be asked, including:

- coding and common algorithms
- design and redesign
- puzzles and brain teasers
- number theory

Practice how to solve these types of problems and if you don't know something, learn it.

CHRISTINA PELLEGRINI FOR TALENTEGG.CA

A little Yelp goes a long way

Silicon success story. A U of T grad talks about hard skills, learning outside of the classroom and the importance of failure

JUSTINE ABIGAIL YU
TalentEgg.ca

Yelp is a user reviews and recommendations social networking site that helps people find local businesses. ISTOCK

For those aspiring to work in the technology industry, working in Silicon Valley is a dream.

Brad Menezes, who graduated from the University of Toronto's mechanical engineering program in 2012, was once one such aspirant.

Today, he's working for the uber-popular website, Yelp. How did he manage it?

What's your role at Yelp and how did you get there?

I'm a product manager. I got to Yelp in the most roundabout way possible. Got an intro to the recruiter. Two phone interviews. One design test. Five in-person interviews, including one with the CEO.

All interviews went well, but I still got rejected.

They said they'd never hired a new graduate as a product manager and it was risky.

I convinced them to place a bet on me and let me intern instead. While interning, they promoted me to a full-time position.

So in short, it took a little perseverance and a lot of luck.

What have your top three life experiences been, and how can you relate those experiences to your career?

I'll give you one experience that repeated in many forms throughout the past years: failure.

I brought on a team for Nspire — a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering the next generation of leaders in business and technology — and a bunch of people quit. I went to a bunch of interviews to become a PM, got rejected from all of them. I had a startup, it tanked.

This is very important because after a while you can look back and realize that the missteps or mistakes were all necessary to move forward. Whenever you try to push your limits really hard, this will happen. But I figure it's better to push your limits than to remain within your comfort zone.

Looking back, one could say that it was a very clear path that I took to get to where I am today at Yelp, but going through it, I really had no idea where I would end up.

What skills and experiences would you recommend for students to develop while in school?

If you want to succeed in the tech industry, make sure the majority of your time is spent learning hard skills, primarily engineering, design, and/or product. The best way to do this is to build something yourself or with friends. Soft skills are very important in certain roles (project management being one of them), but there is still no substitute for good hard skills.

Design, engineering and product skills will give you extremely high leverage as finding people who really excel at this is not common. If you can really hone your skills in one or more of these areas, you can be damn successful in tech.

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If I had known then...

The three things Brad Menezes always wished someone had told him when he was in school:

- Develop hard skills, there is no substitute. Again that's engineering, design, product. This goes far beyond what you're learning in school. Start building things yourself and start hanging out with people who are better than you in these aspects.
- Get some experience in the Valley as early as possible. Facebook, Google, Twitter, Zynga, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Evernote, Netflix, Dropbox, Airbnb, Square, Yelp and so many others are unbelievable places to be right now. Each have some of the smartest people you can ever work with and nothing beats that when you're early in your career.
- Don't be afraid of failure and do not settle. Disregard anyone who tries to tell you that you're not qualified or capable. If you hit some bumps in the road along the way, don't sweat, just keep going.

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Drink of the Week

Wild Hearts

Sweet Coca-Cola flavour meets Wild Turkey and Amaretto in this combination.

Have one or two or three and go wild — as long as you have a designated driver.

- 2 oz. Wild Turkey 81
- 1 oz. cherry-flavoured Cola
- 0.5 oz. Amaretto

Combine Wild Turkey 81, cherry-flavoured Cola and Amaretto on the rocks and garnish with a cherry.

COURTESY OF WILD TURKEY

Bite into the low-fat side of a Philly Cheese Steak

This recipe serves eight. BRIAN MACDONALD, FROM ROSE REISMAN'S COMPLETE LIGHT KITCHEN (WHITECAP BOOKS)

ROSE REISMAN
for more, visit
rosereisman.com

A Philly Cheese Steak sandwich is high in calories, fat and sodium. But if you use a top sirloin, which is lean, you'll be shocked how delicious it is at just 170 calories per serving and 8.2 grams of fat.

1. Preheat the oven to 425 F. Line a baking sheet with foil.

2. Spray non-stick skillet with cooking oil, add vegetable oil and place over medium heat. Add onions and sauté 8 mins. Add garlic, sugar, salt, pepper and bell pepper. Sauté 5 minutes. Set aside and keep warm.

3. Spray skillet with cooking oil and place over high heat. Cook steak until done to your preference, approx. 5 mins. Cool 5 mins. before cutting into thin slices. Add to the veg mix.

4. Combine mayo, sour cream and horseradish. Spread over both sides of rolls. Divide filling among 4 rolls, sprinkle with cheese and replace top half of bun. Place on prepared baking sheet; bake 5 mins. Slice in half.

ROSE REISMAN'S COMPLETE LIGHT KITCHEN (WHITECAP BOOKS)

Ingredients

- 2 tsp vegetable oil
- 2 cups sliced onions
- 2 tsp crushed fresh garlic
- 2 tsp brown sugar
- 1/4 tsp salt and pepper
- 1 cup each sliced red and green bell pepper
- 8 oz grilling steak
- 2 tbsp low-fat mayo
- 3 tbsp low-fat sour cream
- 2 tsp horseradish
- 4 small wholegrain rolls (6-inch), split
- 3/4 cup grated provolone

Cook live with Vikram Vij

Vikram Vij, an award-winning chef in Vancouver, and Metro want to help you find time for family meals. Our mission starts in the form of Canada's first live online cooking show to air Thursday at 6 p.m. ET at metronews.ca/vijcooklive

- **Get ready.** Visit the website to download a copy of the recipe and a complete shopping list before the broadcast. Vij's simple Indian meal is family friendly and he will show you step by step how to prepare it.
- **Have a question?** They can be tweeted live during the show using the hashtag #vijcooklive.
- **Online.** Remember to visit metronews.ca/vijcooklive Thursday at 6 p.m. ET for Canada's first live online cooking show.

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TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION

Blue Jays manager John Gibbons talks to his crew at spring training Feb. 21 in Dunedin, Fla. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Jays unsettled after top players leave nest

WBC. International tournament throws wrench into important pre-season for Toronto

Brett Lawrie, J.P. Arencibia and Jose Reyes are all tweeting their excitement, sharing pictures of their new jerseys and team colours. Team USA is boasting about the reigning National League Cy Young winner starting their opening game.

Meanwhile, back in Dunedin, Fla., the Blue Jays are making do without five of their most important players in this most important season.

The World Baseball Classic, while loudly trumpeted by Major League Baseball as an important international showcase, is throwing a wrench into the pre-season preparations of almost every big-league team, with the Jays among the clubs most unsettled.

"If we had one or two guys gone we wouldn't think anything of it," manager John Gibbons said Tuesday. "I think it's just the number of them and it being this particular year, that's probably why it's a little bit more magnified."

There is great pressure on the Jays this season after GM Alex Anthopoulos's off-season overhaul turned them into overnight contenders. With a new manager and nearly half the roster turned over from a year ago, the team would be scrambling to establish chemistry even without the interruption of the quadrennial classic.

In total, nine Jays left the team on Sunday to play for their countries. In addition to R.A. Dickey (USA), Edwin Encarnacion (Dominican Republic), Arencibia (USA), Lawrie (Canada) and Reyes (DR), a quartet of minor-league players also left camp.

While Canada is not expected to advance to the final round, the U.S. and the Dominican are among the tournament favourites. Jays players with those teams could be gone until March 20.

"If they go far in that thing it's going to be a large part of the spring, we're missing those guys," Gibbons said.

"It doesn't help, since there are so many new faces. But what are you going to do? Can't complain about it, because it's important for baseball, I guess," he added, unconvincingly.

Jose Bautista doesn't share his manager's concern.

"They're only gone for like 10 days, max two weeks" he said, shrugging at his locker in the back corner of the Jays' spring clubhouse.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Canadians top Brewers

Michael Saunders homered and Canada scored four runs in the eighth inning to beat the Milwaukee Brewers 7-4 on Tuesday in an exhibition game ahead of the World Baseball Classic.

- Saunders, the Seattle Mariners outfielder, hit a solo shot in the fourth inning to tie the game at two.
- Canada then took advantage of Brewers reliever Michael Gonzalez to go ahead for good in the eighth. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Holzer passes audition with Leafs

Korbinian Holzer GETTY IMAGES

The Toronto Maple Leafs' mandate with Korbinian Holzer was to play him in the NHL this season and gauge if the native of Munich could play at that level.

Consider that mandate fulfilled.

The club announced Tuesday afternoon it had signed the 25-year-old defenceman to a two-year contract extension. Details were not confirmed, but the deal is believed to be worth $1.575 million US.

Holzer, who was in the last year of a contract that pays him $575,000 this season, will earn $725,000 in the first year of the deal and $850,000 in the final year. He was eligible for unrestricted free agency this coming off-season.

Holzer was selected in the fourth round, 111th overall in the 2006 entry draft. He has spent the past several seasons gaining experience with the AHL's Toronto Marlies.

Holzer has played 16 games for the Leafs this season, and coach Randy Carlyle has not been afraid to work him 15-plus minutes a game. His highest ice time was 23:41 on Feb. 7 at Winnipeg.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Sports in pictures

1 Soccer. Ronaldo helps Madrid advance

Cristiano Ronaldo made a devastating impact in his return to Manchester United, scoring in the 69th minute to send Real Madrid into the Champions League quarter-finals with a 2-1 victory. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

2 NHL. Weiss expected to be out for season

The Florida Panthers announced Tuesday that forward Stephen Weiss is expected to have season-ending wrist surgery. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

3 Curling. Martin falls again at Brier

Kevin Martin, one of the pre-tournament favourites at the Tim Hortons Brier in his hometown of Edmonton, fell to 1-4 on Tuesday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

The Vancouver Whitecaps' Gershon Koffie, left, and Danny Califf of Toronto FC vie for the ball in Vancouver on Saturday. DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

TFC still paying for sins of the past

MLS. Reds continue to audition players with season underway

The MLS season has already started, but Toronto FC remains very much a work in progress.

At practice Tuesday, a half-dozen trialists looked to make their mark under the bubble at the club's north Toronto practice facility. Others, like Welsh striker Robert Earnshaw, signed on last week and are still learning the ropes.

While manager Ryan Nelsen looks to fashion a squad, the new regime is also having to deal off the field with the sins of the franchise's past.

"There's a reason probably why the club hasn't had a certain amount of success," Nelsen said. "We're just trying to implement certain things that make the club work on a good foundation — and that's scouting, recruiting, organization, infrastructure and all of that.

"Once we get that, then we can kind of build on top of that."

With managers Aron Winter, Paul Mariner and technical manager Bob de Klerk leaving the franchise during or after the 2012 season, the Toronto front office seemingly folded into itself until president Kevin Payne came on board Nov. 28.

Nelsen was named coach on Jan. 8, but had to settle with Queens Park Rangers on a suitable date to leave the playing field in the English Premier League and start his managerial career in MLS.

He eventually took the TFC reins on Feb. 1.

"When we came in the club, the club had done nothing," Nelsen said. "No recruitment, no scouting, no nothing, so we literally have to start from scratch here and we feel like we're four or five weeks behind everybody because we had to deal with cap issues and we had to deal with squad issues.

"Hopefully now we're starting to bring in some players. I just wish pre-season would go for four or five more weeks."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Off on the wrong foot

Toronto, which ended its dismal 5-21-8 season in 2012 with a 14-game winless streak, lost its season opener 1-0 in Vancouver on Saturday.

- "I feel really bad for the guys because I thought they worked really hard," Ryan Nelsen said. "They stayed organized, they never gave up and they were always in the game up until the end."

Soccer

CSA will no longer sanction CSL

The Canadian Soccer Association has removed its seal of approval from the Canadian Soccer League, a largely Ontario-centred semi-pro league with long-standing soccer roots.

The CSA, the national governing body of soccer, says it is going ahead with the regional-soccer-league blueprint recommended in a recent report. And it has opted not to continue sanctioning the CSL because it wants to move ahead with the next stage of its plan with a clean slate.

"If somebody else came to us and said, 'Hey we want to run a semi-pro league,' we're not going to sanction them either," CSA president Victor Montagliani said in an interview Tuesday.

The CSL calls the decision unfair and says it will fight the move. And it says it is baffled by the decision since it is essentially a regional league already in place. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Sun lovers will bug out over this baby

Review. Volkswagen's drop-top has arrived in all its attention grabbing glory

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ALL PHOTOS WHEELBASE

When Volkswagen introduced the Beetle hatchback for the 2012 model year, you had to suspect the convertible edition was hard on its heels.

Convertible Beetles have been around since 1949, when the first rear-engine, air-cooled Type 15 was launched. VW sold more than 330,000 of them worldwide over the next 32 years, then cranked out another 235,000 New Beetle Convertibles from 2003 until the 2010 model year when it was put out to pasture.

The third-generation Beetle (the "New" is gone) Convertible that goes on sale in mid-February maintains the tradition, but in a less-retro way. Visually, the body is slightly lower, but is now a substantial 8.5 centimetres wider and about 15 centimetres longer than the old New Beetle. That means significantly more leg and elbowroom, for both front- and rear-seat passengers. Front headroom is nearly as generous as before despite the lower profile, while rear-seat headroom actually increases slightly.

The Beetle Convertible benefits from a more rigid body architecture with 20 per cent more resistance to bending and twisting. This is helpful since convertibles don't have a roof structure to join the back and the front of the car together. The only real support is in the floor.

Base Beetle Convertibles fall under the Comfortline trim name and include most power and climate accouterments plus a set of roll bars behind the back seat that immediately pop up should a tip-over be detected. Heated front seats and leatherette seat covers are included, but beware of burning skin on hot summer days.

The High-line adds a genuine leather interior, sport bucket seats, push button start, 17-inch wheels (16s are standard) and fancier interior/exterior trim.

High-line models can also be enhanced with a 400-watt nine-speaker Fender audio system and touch-screen navigation.

In content and usable space, the Beetle Convertible represents a giant leap forward. It's no longer a cutesy toy car, but should now resonate with performance-minded buyers who would prefer the option of bringing a few friends along to savour the open-air experience.

Design

Volkswagen's designers have done as great a job fashioning the Beetle Convertible as they did with the hatchback and have even succeeded in creating a less miniscule trunk. Just make sure you pack only the essentials. To be fair, the split-folding rear seat lets you extend the stowage area when two or three passengers are aboard.

2013 VW Beetle Convertible

- **Type.** Two-door, front-wheel-drive convertible
- **Engine (hp)**: 2.5-litre DOHC I5 (170)
- **Transmissions.** Six-speed automatic
- **Base price (incl. destination).** $30,300

Engine

Only a single powertrain is being offered in Beetle Convertibles sold in Canada: A 170-horsepower 2.5-litre five-cylinder. Our fortunate American cousins will also be able to select a turbo-charged 200-horsepower 2.0-litre four-cylinder, or a 140-horsepower 2.0-litre turbo-diesel.

Roof

The soft top is triple lined on the outside and has three layers of insulation on the inside to minimize noise. Two electric motors raise and lower the top in 9.5 and 11 seconds, respectively, at vehicle speeds up to 50 km/h. The top no longer extends beyond the rear deck when folded, which makes for a much tidier appearance.

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Find comfort in a no-nonsense Accord

Second Gear.
2008 to 2012 Honda Accord a solid ride, but watch out for brake wear

JUSTIN PRITCHARD
drive@metronews.ca

2008 marked the launch of the eighth generation Honda Accord, which had earned a very solid reputation for reliable operation, sensibility and long-term value.

Available in both coupe and sedan variants with several engine and transmission combinations, this generation Accord also offered features like heated leather seats, voice-commanded navigation, a sunroof, steering-wheel mounted controls, dual-zone climate control and plenty more.

Accord LX was the basic model, while EX and EX-L or EX-L Navi represented mid-range and top-line, respectively.

Common Issues

Thousands of owners have complained of premature brake component wear, so feel for any pulsation and listen for any squealing during light to moderate brake application. Be sure to have the brakes inspected on any used Accord you're considering, or budget for brake job and service.

Oil consumption is another well-documented issue with this generation of Honda Accord, and especially those with the V6 engine and automatic transmission. Every engine will "use" some oil between oil changes, but shoppers are advised to check the oil in the model they're considering (while the engine is cold) to ensure it's fresh and full.

Listen for a whine or hum from the power steering pump while you steer at a low speed, or while stopped. If any unusual noise is noted, it's likely caused by a faulty o-ring, which allows air to enter the system. This is a relatively easy fix.

SUBMITTED

What owners like

On-board storage space, fuel economy and overall comfort were typically cited as key purchase factors by owners. Intuitive controls and a safe, solid road feel were also noted.

What owners dislike

Common complaints include cheap interior materials, uncomfortable and stiff seats, the lack of a manual mode on the automatic transmission and bland styling

Verdict

Largely, it looks like the Accord is one of the most reliable, no-nonsense vehicles in today's used market. Buy confidently if the model you're considering shows none of the common issues and has a thumbs-up from a mechanic during a pre-purchase inspection.

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[1]$2,753.01 due at delivery. License, insurance, registration and taxes are extra.
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© 2013 smart Canada, a Division of Mercedes-Benz Canada Inc. Model shown is a 2013 smart fortwo passion. *Total price of $12,655 is based on the 2013 smart fortwo pure, and includes MSRP of $14,400, Freight & PDI of $1,295, Dealer Admin fee of $395, air conditioning levy of $100, EHF tires, filters, batteries of $23.86, PPSA of $35.15, OMVIC fee of $5 and applicable dealer discount. License, insurance, registration and taxes are extra. Total due on delivery of $2,753.01 includes first month's payment of $99, down payment of $800 and total dealer fees of $1,854.01. Lease offer based on a new 2013 smart fortwo pure available only through Mercedes-Benz Financial Services on approved credit for a limited time. Lease example based on $99 per month for 24 months. A.P.R. of 0.9% applies. Total obligation is $5,030.01. Security deposit is waived. 12,000 km/year allowance ($0.20/km for excess kilometres applies). License, insurance, registration and taxes are extra. Offers may change without notice and cannot be combined with any other offers. See your local Mercedes-Benz Corporate Store for details. Offers end March 16th, 2013.

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Parts Department

Whether it's a birthday gift for a friend or loved one or just something for yourself, here are some ideas for unique automotive-inspired presents.

WHEELBASE MEDIA

The perfect egg

Racing and Emotion has come up with custom-built chairs that are real works of art. Their focus is on the Porsche 917, which was one of the most famous of all racing Porsches and the car star of the movie Le Mans that actor Steve McQueen produced and starred in. Racing and Emotion makes "egg chairs" that are inspired by Arne Jacobsen's 1958 design. Each of the two distinct shapes is produced from molded fiberglass and feature cloth or optional leather seating surfaces. Prices begin at $6,500. racing-emotionusa.com.

Multi-purpose gear tray

The maker of this item says it can be used as an ashtray, but it's unthinkable that the purchaser would ever abuse it in that fashion. Instead, consider this gear dish the perfect office desk accessory for displaying candy, coins, paper clips, keys, etc. The item actually originated from inside the gearbox of one of Honda's Formula One race cars piloted by Jenson Button and Rubens Barichello during the 2008 season. The Gear dish is available for $54 and can be purchased through etsy.com/shop/LedonGifts. Quantities are limited.

The King's race

Of the movies made by Elvis Presley, three involved auto racing (Elvis was a serious car buff). One of his most famous films was Spinout, which was a cute and corny 1966 flick that followed the usual formula with Elvis singing his way into the hearts of his fans, along with his female co-star who was played by Shelley Fabrares. Racing fans will get a kick out of the classic cars (Cobras, Corvettes, etc.) plus close-ups of Elvis piloting an Elva M1A Can-Am racer. You can find a remastered widescreen version for about $15 at stores specializing in DVDs of older movies, or amazon.com or cduniverse.com.

This is presidential

Instead of a classic car, why not show off something a bit more unique? Hobbymasters sells a 1:43-scale Chevrolet Suburban Armored model for $27 that's a copy of the vehicle that can be frequently seen in presidential cavalcades. It features opening doors, rubber tires mounted on special wheels and all the correct presidential seals and fender-mounted flags. ishobbymasters.com. **VIEW THE EVER-EVOLVING AUTO GIFT GUIDE AT WHEELBASE.WS/MEDIA (CLICK THE "COOL AUTO GIFT IDEAS" CATEGORY AT THE RIGHT).**

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Since teens tend to be more tech-savvy than older drivers, they may have a false sense of security about multi-tasking on the road. ISTOCK

Tickets don't stop teens from distracted driving

Driving Force. Safety biggest deterrent, while fines would only stop 7 per cent, poll finds

JIL MCINTOSH
drive@metronews.ca

Cars are safer today than they've ever been, but drivers aren't necessarily so. Car crashes are the number one cause of death among Canadian teenagers and recent statistics indicate that distracted driving is a factor in as many as 20 to 80 per cent of all collisions.

"We're targeting teens at anything to do with distracted driving," says Carmine Venditti, agency manager for Allstate Insurance Canada. "We list such things as eating, texting, speaking on the phone or putting on makeup while driving. These are things that are not keeping you focused on the road."

In a recent online poll, Allstate found that while 94 per cent of those responding said they were aware they could be charged for distracted driving, most of them cited safety as the main reason for staying off the phone and focusing on driving. Only seven per cent said that the threat of a ticket was the real deterrent.

Some 89 per cent of high school students polled, age 13 to 17, also said they would voice concern if they were riding in a vehicle and the driver was distracted.

"It's difficult to be age-specific, but we're seeing a lot more distracted driving at a younger age level," Venditti says. "The numbers drop somewhat as the age group gets older, but distracted driving is happening to adults too. What we saw was that the teenagers are bringing this over to their parents, and we're hearing, 'I see my dad doing this, and I tell him not to do it.'"

One problem, according to Venditti, is that younger drivers are usually more tech-savvy and for them, texting while they're doing something else isn't all that difficult. "Multi-tasking is something that's easy for them, and they think they can text and drive," she says. "People say they won't do it, but it's difficult to know if they will. The legislation isn't scaring them, so we're hoping they'll understand the impact and the consequences on them and their families."

Distracted driving facts

Numerous studies show that it's the call, not the device, that diverts focus from driving. Both hand-held and hands-free phone calls contribute to more driving errors, slower reaction times and more collisions.

- Passengers aren't as distracting as phone calls, since they tend to stop talking in stressful situations, or make drivers aware of potential problems on the road.
- Drivers on phone calls tend to drive slower overall, but those on hand-held phones slow down more than those on hands-free. Studies show that texting while driving is more dangerous than making a call.

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Disclosure:†Offer available on retail leases of new 2014 Mazda6 GX (G4XL64AA00)// new 2013 Mazda3 GX (D4XS53AA00) with a lease APR of 4.99%// 2.49% and monthly payments of $287//$179 for 48 months, the total lease obligation is $17,759//$8,609, including down payment of $3,995//$0. As shown, 2014 Mazda6 GT (G4TL64AA00) with lease APR of 4.99% and monthly payments of $499 for 48months, the total lease obligation is $23,975, including down payment of $0. Lease payments include freight and P.D.E. of $1,695. 20,000 km per year mileage allowance applies; if exceeded, additional 8¢ per km applies (12¢ per km for CX 9 models). Offers exclude HST. Offered leasing available to retail customers only. †Finance Pricing for new 2013 CX 5 GX (NVXK63AA00)// new 2013 Mazda3 Sport GX (D5XS53AA00)// new 2012 Mazda5 GS (E6SD62AA00)// new 2013 CX 9 GS 2WD (0VSB83AA00) is $25,099// $18,796 financed//$23,945//$36,099 financed at 0%//0.99%//0%//2.99% over 72 months// 84 months//84 months// 84 months equals bi weekly payments of $157// $107//$132//$196 with $595//$0 down//$0 down//$3,995 downpayment, cost of borrowing is $0//$662//$0//$3,495 with a total obligation of $25,099//$19458////$27,057.85//$39,594. Offer includes freight, P.D.E. and fees. Offer excludes HST. ALL FUEL ECONOMY RATINGS – Based on ENERGUIDE Fuel Consumption Rating for the 2012-These estimates are based on Government of Canada approved criteria and testing methods. Actual fuel consumption may vary. MPG is listed in Imperial gallons. Based on Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. ‡ To learn more about Ward's 10 Best Interiors, visit www.wardsauto.com <http://www.wardsauto.com> . Based on 2013 fuel consumption ratings published by Natural Resources Canada. OFFERS END APRIL 1st, 2013, VISIT YORKDALEDUFFERINMAZDA.CA OR CALL 416-789-4521 FOR MORE DETAILS.

The 2014 Chevrolet SS, and its NASCAR Sprint Cup equivalent, both made their official debuts at last weekend's Daytona 500. SUBMITTED

The Chevy SS: It's been a long time coming

Auto Pilot. It's about time this happened — 17 years ago was the last time Chevy released a rear drive V8 powered sedan in North America

AUTO PILOT
Mike Goetz
drive@metronews.ca

From Oz

- The SS uses a derivative of the rear-drive platform under Camaro, a platform initially developed by Holden, GM's subsidiary in Australia.
- Holden will build the SS in Australia, and ship them to us here in North America. But don't expect a lot of them to be built.

At last weekend's big NASCAR race in Daytona, Chevrolet officially unveiled its newest sedan, the 2013 Chevrolet SS.

When it arrives in dealerships at the end of the year, it will be the first time in 17 years that Chevrolet will offer a rear-drive V8-powered sedan in North America.

Hallelujah

I guess I have a soft spot for Chevrolet rear-drive V8 sedans, because they were what my father drove during the 1970s, when I was a very impressionable and car-needy teenager. He taught me to drive in his 1971 Chevrolet Impala.

Good on Chevrolet for realizing that the brand needs to have at least one of these beasts in its catalogue. People yearn for them, it's part of Chevrolet's heritage, and it corrects that strained NASCAR visual universe, where Chevrolet-based NASCAR teams have been covering their ferocious rear-drive V8 racecars with body shells based on Impala stylings. The Impala has been a neutered, front-drive V6 sedan since 2000.

No coincidence that the NASCAR Chevrolet SS race car also debuted at the Daytona race. And right on script, five-time series champion Jimmie Johnson, in the No. 48 Lowe's Chevrolet SS, took home the checkered flag.

The Chevrolet SS also upholds the "SS" designation with pride and purpose. (The brand has traditionally reserved those letters to designate high-performance Chevys.) The new SS will be motivated by essentially the same, newly-engineered 6.2-litre small-block V8 used in the 2013 Corvette — good for 415-hp and 415 lb-ft of torque. The only transmission is a six-speed automatic with manual shifters mounted on the steering wheel.

Rear-drive V8 sedans were once ubiquitous. Now they are premium pieces, which is the way they should be I guess. Not too many of us need that much engine. But as we've seen time and time again, when it comes to automobile love, or any kind of love for that matter, need has nothing to do with it.

The heart wants what it wants

As we've seen time and time again, when it come to automobile love, or any kind of love for that matter, need has nothing to do with it.

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*Limited time finance purchase offer available through Volkswagen Finance, on approved credit. MSRP of $16,385/$26,600 for a new and unregistered 2013 Jetta 2.0L / 2013 Tiguan 2.0T base model with 5/6-speed manual transmission, including $1,395/$1,610 freight and PDI, financed at 2.4%/2.9% APR for 84/72 months equals 182/156 bi-weekly payments of $97.89/$185.18. $0 down payment. Cost of borrowing is $1,431.20/$2,413.33 for a total obligation of $17,816.20/$29,013.33. PPSA fee, license, insurance, registration, any dealer or other charges, options and applicable taxes are extra. Models shown: 2013 Jetta 2.5L Highline, $24,590 / Tiguan 2.0T Highline R-Line, $41,125. Models shown for illustration purposes only. Models may not be exactly as shown. Certain conditions apply. Dealer may sell or lease for less. Dealer order/trade may be necessary. Offers end April 30, 2013 and are subject to change or cancellation without notice. Visit vw.ca or your Volkswagen dealer for details. "Volkswagen", the Volkswagen logo, "Das Auto & Design", "Autobahn for All", "Jetta" and "Tiguan" are registered trademarks of Volkswagen AG. © 2013 Volkswagen Canada.

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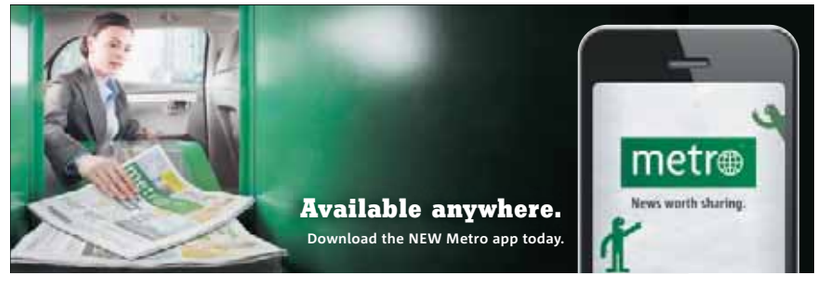

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Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
There is no point complaining if you are forced to do something against your will today because it won't make any difference. Anyway, why would you complain when it will work in your favour?

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
You may be practical and methodical by nature but don't immerse yourself in details too deeply today or you may lose sight of the wider picture — a picture that looks brighter by the moment.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
If you have ambitions to be someone important then this is clearly a make or break time. It won't just happen as if by magic, of course, but it will happen if you are determined to make it happen. Get busy.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
A friend is opposing you only because they genuinely believe they are acting in your best interests. Inform them that you are the one who decides what your interests are, though be polite about it.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Cut back on your workload over the next few days, even if it means you earn less than before. Don't worry that you won't be able to make ends meet. You should know by now that fate usually provides.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
If there is a project that needs completing, now is the time to make that extra effort. If there is a relationship that needs rescuing, now is the time to kiss and make up.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
It seems you are weighed down by domestic chores. Fortunately, beneficial events over the next two days will lighten your load and free up time for more enjoyable things. Love is in the air.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Keep your plans under wraps so no one has the chance to steal your ideas. One of the most creative times of the year will begin quite soon, so it's OK to put your own needs first.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
If you allow your emotions to get the better of you today then squabbles are inevitable, but if you refuse to give in to negative emotions then you will sail through the day with ease. The choice is yours.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Think before you speak today but don't hold back once you have decided what you want to say. Not everyone will be happy with your observations but what matters is that you call it as you see it.

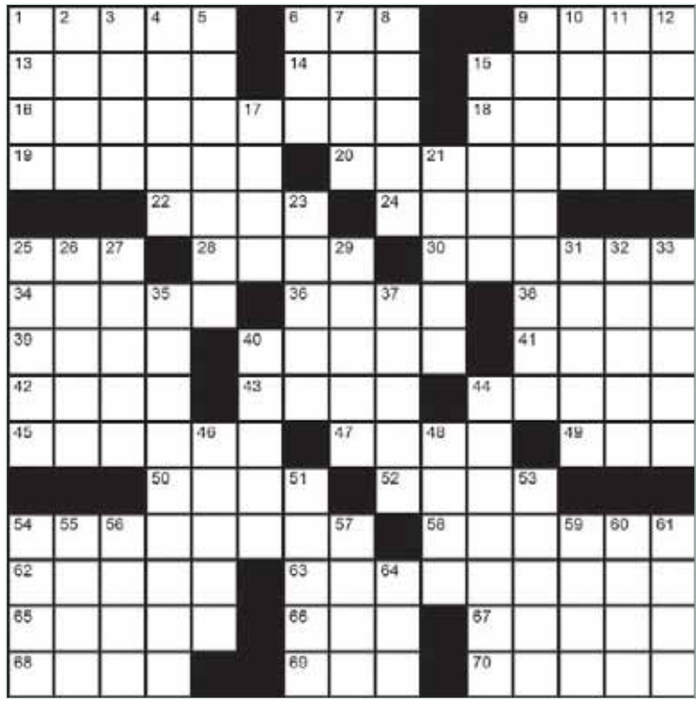
♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Resist the urge to splash out on things you don't really want or need. Impulse buying will deplete your resources faster than you thought possible, so let someone else hold the purse strings.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
It's time to start something that delights you. It does not matter what your work or family responsibilities may be you must make time for what you enjoy.

SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

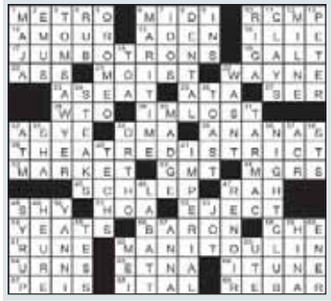
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



Across
1. Drinks at ice cream parlors
6. Wanna-__ (Aspirants)
9. Steve __ (Anti-apartheid activist portrayed in 1987 film "Cry Freedom")
13. _ __ of faith
14. Keyboard key
15. Practical joke
16. Prime Minister William Lyon __ King
18. __ mortis
19. Tempt
20. Its motto is Gloriosus et Liber
22. Not yet final, at law
24. Peru's capital
25. 'Violin' suffix
28. Engrave
30. Newfoundland town with an international airport
34. Swimming spots
36. Go backpacking
38. Biblical peak
39. Guess Who's "Hang __ __ Your Life"
40. __-Tracy, Quebec
41. Rick's 1942 film beloved
42. God: French
43. Train: Spanish
44. "Bolero" composer
45. Writer
47. Singer Ms. Brickell
49. Stop
50. Walk on ice, do this
52. J.R.R. Tolkien creatures
54. Vancouver band, __ Trench
58. Painter or sculptor
62. '80s TV series, "The _-__"
63. Bigfoot
65. Absurd
66. Poetic contraction
67. Magazine installment
68. Kinks song
69. English cathedral city
70. Herb kind

Down
1. Broadway Auntie
2. Mr. Thicke (Actor born in Kirkland Lake, Ontario)
3. Univ. professor's speech
4. "__' Care of Business" by BTO
5. Charles Darwin's On the Origin of __
6. Director Mr. Luhrmann
7. __. round (Part of a tournament)
8. Be a thief
9. Royal Yacht __ (Yacht that Queen Elizabeth used)
10. Character in Shakespeare's Othello
11. Dresser drawer attachment
12. Ingredient in Cajun cooking
15. __ ballerina
17. Savings = __ egg
21. Mr. Lythgoe, "American Idol" executive producer
23. Blood of ancient Greek gods
25. Apple music players
26. Type of boom
27. Bag carrier
29. New employee
31. __ into (Do investigative work)
32. Buddy of "The Beverly Hillbillies"
33. Willy Wonka creator Mr. Dahl
35. American state with Acadian ancestry
37. The Way of the Sword, martial art of Japan
40. American writer Gertrude
44. Military enlistee
46. Point a finger at
48. Baghdad's locale
51. Use glue
53. Hidden hoard
54. Canada Post stuff
55. __ time (Never): 2 wds.
56. Authentic
57. Navigate
59. __-bitsy
60. Soap __ (Bathroom cleanser's target)
61. You, Shakespeare-style
64. Mr. Stallone, nicknamed

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

		7	2		5		6	
9		3	1	4		5		
	6						1	2
2			5		4		9	3
	9			8			4	
6	4		9		3			8
4	5						3	
		9		5	1	8		6
	1		3		2	7		

Yesterday's Sudoku

4	1	8	6	3	2	5	7	9
9	2	3	7	4	5	8	6	1
7	6	5	8	1	9	3	4	2
8	9	2	1	5	6	7	3	4
1	7	6	3	9	4	2	8	5
3	5	4	2	8	7	1	9	6
2	4	1	9	7	3	6	5	8
5	8	7	4	6	1	9	2	3
6	3	9	5	2	8	4	1	7

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Thursday
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Sorento SX shown[1]

2013 SORENTO

AUTO, AIR & KEYLESS ENTRY

HWY (A/T): 6.5L/100KM
CITY (A/T): 9.8L/100KM

OWN IT FROM **$159*** BI-WEEKLY | WITH **$0** DOWN | AT **1.49%** APR FOR UP TO 60 MONTHS

- **MORE MAXIMUM CARGO SPACE** THAN HONDA CR-V[1]
- **2 MORE YEARS WARRANTY** THAN FORD ESCAPE[2]
- **MORE HORSEPOWER** THAN TOYOTA RAV4[3]

COMPARE MORE HERE

OR VISIT WWW.KIA.CA/COMPARESORENTO

bi-weekly for 60 months, amortized over 84 months with **$0 DOWN PAYMENT.** $8,131 remaining balance. Offer includes delivery, destination and fees of $2,183 and **$1,650 "3 PAYMENTS ON US" SAVINGS*. BASED ON A PURCHASE PRICE OF $29,078.** Offer based on 2013 Sorento LX AT FWD.

Sportage SX shown[1]

2013 SPORTAGE

AUTO, AIR & KEYLESS ENTRY

HWY (A/T): 6.5L/100KM
CITY (A/T): 9.7L/100KM

OWN IT FROM **$154*** BI-WEEKLY | WITH **$0** DOWN | AT **1.99%** APR FOR UP TO 60 MONTHS

- **MORE CARGO VOLUME** THAN JEEP COMPASS[4]
- **MORE HORSEPOWER** THAN MAZDA CX-5[5]
- **2 MORE YEARS WARRANTY** THAN NISSAN ROGUE[6]

COMPARE MORE HERE

OR VISIT WWW.KIA.CA/COMPARESPORTAGE

bi-weekly for 60 months, amortized over 84 months with **$0 DOWN PAYMENT.** $7,840 remaining balance. Offer includes delivery, destination and fees of $2,183 and **$750 LOAN SAVINGS[1]. BASED ON A PURCHASE PRICE OF $26,878.** Offer based on 2013 Sportage 2.4L LX AT FWD.

Soul 4u shown[1]

2013 SOUL

AIR, KEYLESS ENTRY & SATELLITE RADIO

HWY (M/T): 6.7L/100KM
CITY (M/T): 8.5L/100KM

OWN IT FROM **$128*** BI-WEEKLY | WITH **$0** DOWN | AT **2.49%** APR FOR UP TO 60 MONTHS

- **2 MORE YEARS WARRANTY** THAN TOYOTA MATRIX[7]
- **MORE HORSEPOWER** THAN SCION XB[8]
- **MORE PASSENGER VOLUME** THAN NISSAN CUBE[9]

COMPARE MORE HERE

OR VISIT WWW.KIA.CA/COMPARESOUL

bi-weekly for 60 months, amortized over 84 months with **$0 DOWN PAYMENT.** $6,493 remaining balance. Offer includes delivery, destination and fees of $2,183. **BASED ON A PURCHASE PRICE OF $21,378.** Offer based on 2013 Soul 2.0L 2u MT.

5 Year Warranty[10]

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Offer(s) available on select new 2013 models through participating dealers to qualified retail customers who take delivery by April 1, 2013. Dealers may sell or lease for less. Some conditions apply. See dealer for complete details. Vehicles shown may include optional accessories and upgrades available at extra cost. All offers are subject to change without notice. All pricing includes delivery and destination fees up to $1,610, $34 tire recycling/filter charges, $5 OMVIC fee, environmental fee and $100 A/C charge (where applicable) and excludes licensing, registration, insurance, other taxes, variable dealer administration fees (up to $599) and down payment (if applicable and unless otherwise specified). Other lease and financing options also available. *"0% purchase financing is available on select new 2013 Kia models O.A.C. Terms vary by model and trim, see dealer for complete details. Representative financing example based on 2013 Sorento LX + AT (SR75B) with a selling price of $29,078, financed at 0% APR for 60 months, 155 bi-weekly payments equal $224 per payment with a down payment/equivalent trade of $0. **"Don't Pay For 90 Days" offer (90-day payment deferral) applies to purchase financing on select new 2012/2013 models. No interest will accrue during the first 90 days of the finance contract. After 90 days, interest accrues and the purchaser will repay both the principal and interest monthly over the contract's term. ***"3 Payments On Us" offer is available O.A.C. to eligible retail customers who finance or lease a new 2013 Sorento from a participating dealer between March 1-April 1, 2013. Customers will receive a cheque in the amount of three payments (excluding taxes) to a maximum of $1,650 per month on a lease up to $1,650 reductions from the selling lease price after taxes. Offer cannot be combined with Don't Pay For 90 Days promotion. †Bi-weekly finance payment O.A.C. for new 2013 Sorento LX AT FWD (SR75B)/2013 Sportage LX AT FWD (SP75B)/2013 Soul 2.0L 2u MT (SU03B) based on a selling price of $29,078/$26,878/$21,378 is 0%/$154/$128 with an APR of 1.49%/1.99%/2.49% for 60 months, amortized over an 84-month period. Estimated remaining principal balance of $8,131/$7,840/$6,493 plus applicable taxes due at end of 60-month period. Retailer may sell for less. See dealer for full details. †Loan savings for 2013 Sportage LX AT FWD (SP75B) in $750 and is available on purchase financing only O.A.C. Loan savings vary by model and are deducted from the selling price before taxes. Some conditions apply. **Participants in Kia's test-drive event and receive a pair of tickets to the Toronto FC home opener match on March 9, 2013, at the Rogers Centre. Suggested retail value of $56.50. Offer available at participating Kia dealers only. Offer valid from March 1-9, 2013, or while quantities last. Cannot be combined with any other offer. Limit one pair of tickets per person. Must hold a valid Canadian driver's license and be a resident of Ontario. ‡Sorento LX 2.0L/1 vs. Ch-V LX 2.4L/0, with second-row seats folded. ‡‡60 months/100,000km vs. 36 months/60,000km. §Sorento 3.3 litre vs. RAV4 2.5 litre. §§Sportage LX 2WD vs. Compass Sport/North 4WD. ¶Sportage LX 2WD vs. Ch-V LX 2.4L/155hp. ¶¶60 months/100,000km vs. 36 months/60,000km. ##Soul 2.0L/dohp vs. Scion xB 2.4L/bhp. ***Soul 2.0L/2,293lb vs. Cube 1.8L/2,756lb. †††Model shown MSRP. Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price for 2013 Sorento LX/Sorento LX/Sportage LX AT FWD (SR75B)/2013 Sportage LX AT SX Navigation (SP75B)/2013 Soul 2.0L 4u (Luxury Pkg) AT (SU03B)/2013 Soul 2.0L MP/4-cyl (A/T) (SU03B) and $25,595 (A/T) SX (SR75B) and $29,595 (A/T) SX Limited (SR75B) and $31,595 (A/T) SX Limited Navigation (SR75B) and $23,595 (A/T) EX (SR75B) and $21,595 (A/T) LX (SR75B) and $20,595 (A/T) LX (SR75B) and $19,595 (A/T) LX (SR75B) and $18,595 (A/T) LX (SR75B) and $17,595 (A/T) LX (SR75B) and $16,595 (A/T) LX (SR75B) and $15,595 (A/T) LX (SR75B) and $14,595 (A/T) LX (SR75B) and $13,595 (A/T) LX (SR75B) and $12,595 (A/T) LX (SR75B) and $11,595 (A/T) LX (SR75B) and $10,595 (A/T) LX (SR75B) and $9,595 (A/T) LX (SR75B) and $8,595 (A/T) LX (SR75B) and $7,595 (A/T) LX (SR75B) and $6,595 (A/T) LX (SR75B) and $5,595 (A/T) LX (SR75B) and $4,595 (A/T) LX (SR75B) and $3,595 (A/T) LX (SR75B) and $2,595 (A/T) LX (SR75B) and $1,595 (A/T) LX (SR75B) and $595 (A/T) LX (SR75B) and $0 (A/T) LX (SR75B) and $0 (A/T) LX (SR75B) and $0